

nificent palace || for himself, in the execution of which he was greatly assisted by his old friend the king of Tyre. He likewise built another palace for his queen, and a third, which he called the House of the Forest of Lebanon *, and in which he principally resided during the summer.

In acknowledgment for the great services received from Hiram king of Tyre, Solomon offered him twenty cities in the land of Galilee, adjoining to his own country; but, for some reason or other, he did not think proper to accept them. From this refusal, that part of the country was called Cabul, which in the Phœnician language, signifies, *It doth not please me.*

The fortifications of Jerusalem being deemed insufficient for the defence of that spacious and opulent city, Solomon applied himself to the completion of such repairs as were deemed necessary for the security of the place. He rebuilt the walls round the city, and erected a senate-house in that part of it called Millo. He likewise repaired and fortified the cities of Hazor, Megiddo, Beth-horon the Nether, Baalath, Tadmor in the wilderness of Syria, and Gazer, the latter of which the king of Egypt took from the Canaanites, and gave it in dower with his daughter. He fortified all the cities in which were kept his chariots and horses, as also those he had allotted as magazines for corn, wine, and oil.

There was still a stubborn remnant of the Canaanites who resided near Mount Lebanon, and who, for some time, had disputed their allegiance to the kings of Israel. These Solomon reduced to a state of subjection, made them tributaries by obliging them to supply him yearly with a certain number of slaves to be employed in tilling the land, and other sorts of drudgery. As for his own subjects, he appointed a great part of them either to be surveyors of his works, or guards to his person, or commanders in the army, or traders and merchants, that so he might make his nation as famous as it was possible to be effected by human policy.

To increase his wealth, and promote commerce, Solomon caused a fleet of ships to be built in Ezion-Geber, a port in the Red Sea, in which he was greatly assisted by his good friend and ally Hiram, king of Tyre, who sent him a number of expert pilots and skilful mariners. By these means his subjects, who soon attained

the art of navigation, were enabled to make several advantageous voyages to different parts; and particularly, in one to Ophir, they brought him home no less than four hundred and twenty talents of gold, with many other commodities and curiosities of considerable value.

The great fame Solomon had now acquired both for his riches and wisdom, was spread throughout most parts of the world, and the greatest respect was paid him by the princes and nobility of all the surrounding countries. Among others who heard of his fame was the Queen of Sheba, who being a princess of extraordinary understanding, and highly accomplished, the character given of Solomon so captivated her, that she resolved to see and hear him, wisely concluding that experimental proof surpassed the most confirmed report, which, on proper examination, might be found inconclusive, or unauthenticated. Having debated the matter for some time with herself, she at length came to a resolution, notwithstanding all the hazards and difficulties of a long and tedious journey, to make him an honourable visit: this she did not only for the satisfaction of gratifying her curiosity, but likewise to enjoy the benefit of instruction from that wisdom, of which she had heard so very extraordinary an account.

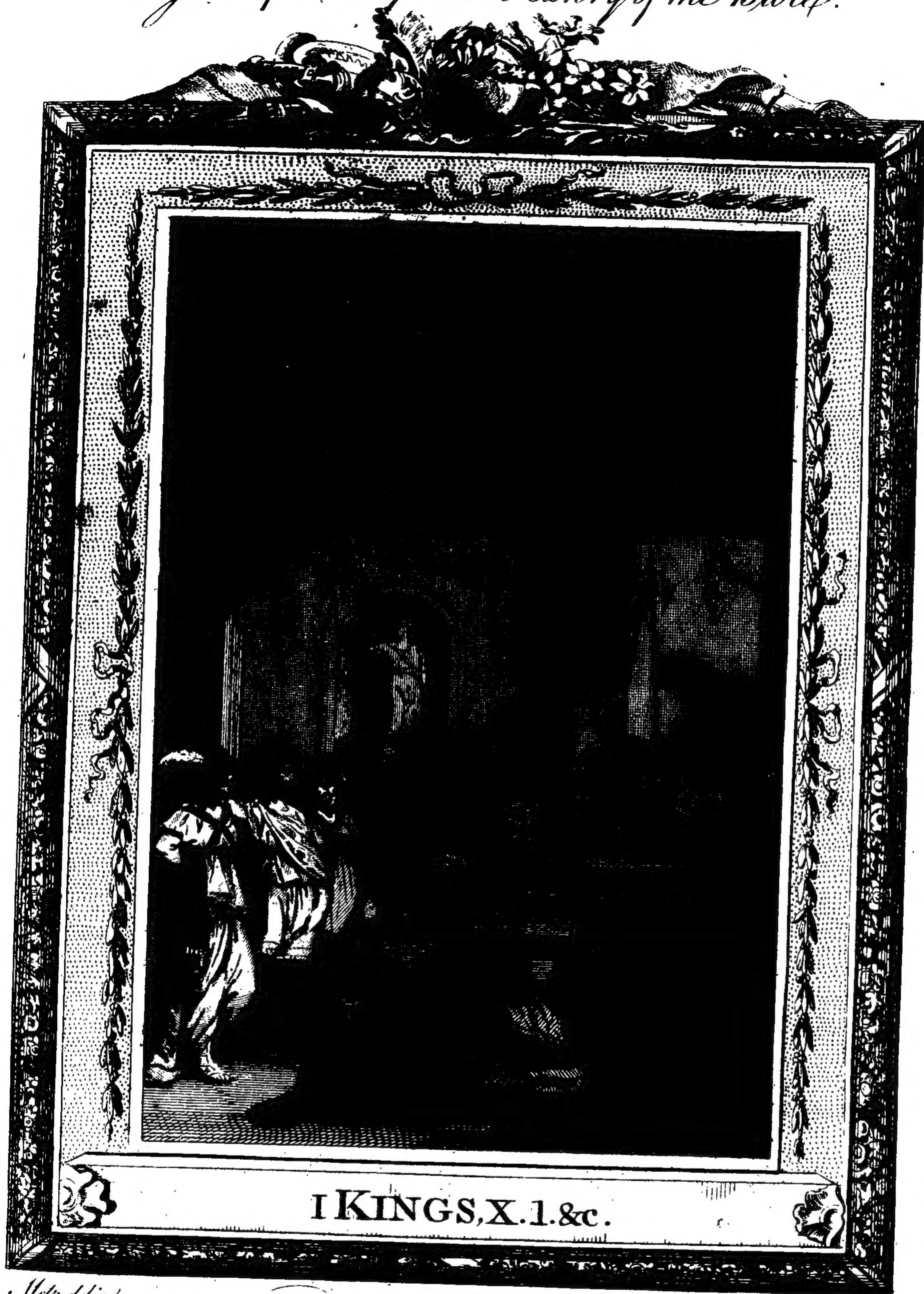
Thus resolved, the Queen of Sheba set out on her journey to Jerusalem, attended by a train suitable to her dignity, taking with her a number of camels laden with spices, gold, precious stones, and various other valuable articles. On her arrival at the city she was introduced to the king, who received her with all possible honour, courtesy and respect due to her character. Her purpose was, to try if Solomon's wisdom was answerable to the high commendations she had heard of it; and therefore, in discourse, she proposed to him several enigmatical questions. The king answered all the difficulties she proposed with such ease and clearness as perfectly astonished her, and she beheld a display of his surprising power far superior to what had been represented. She greatly admired the magnificence of his palace; the discipline and œconomy of his household, and the peculiar grace and propriety with which he conducted all his affairs. She was likewise infinitely pleased with the sight of the daily sacrifices, and the application, care and

|| The description of this palace, which we may gather from Josephus, Lamy, and others, that have treated of Solomon's buildings, is in this manner related:—"Upon several rows of pillars, there was erected a spacious pile of building, in the nature of a common hall, for the hearing of causes. It was an hundred cubits in length, fifty in breadth, and in depth thirty, supported by fifteen square columns, covered with Corinthian work in cedar, and fortified with double doors, curiously wrought, that served both for the security and ornament of the place. In the middle of this hall was another edifice of thirty cubits square, and underfet with strong pillars, wherein was a placed throne of state, on which the king himself used to sit personally in judgment. On the right-hand of this Court of Justice stood the king's own palace, and, on the left, that which he built for Pharaoh's daughter, both fitted up with cedar, and built with huge stones of ten cubits square, which were partly plain, and partly overlaid with the most precious marble.—The rooms were hung with rich hangings, and beautified with images and sculptures of all kinds, so exquisitely finished, that they seemed to be alive, and in motion. It would be an endless work

" (says Josephus) to give a particular survey of this mighty mass of building; so many courts and other contrivances. " such a variety of chambers and offices, great and little, " long and large galleries, vast rooms of state, and others for " feasting and entertainment, set out as richly as could be, " with costly furniture and gildings; besides that, all the " services for the king's table were of pure gold. In a word, " the whole house was, in a manner, made up, from top to " bottom, of white marble, cedar, gold and silver, with precious stones, here and there intermingled upon the walls " and ceilings, after the manner of the adorning of the " temple."

* It is the opinion of some commentators, that this house was the same with the palace which Solomon built in Jerusalem, and that it received its name from the tall pillars that supported it, which looked like the cedars in the Forest of Lebanon; but this opinion is certainly ill founded, because the Holy Scriptures speak of it as a distinct building, though, perhaps, it might not be far distant from the other, on some cool shady mountain which made it resemble Mount Lebanon.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



Motz delin.

Collyer sculp.

KING SOLOMON seated on his Throne?
receiving a Visit from the **QUEEN of SHEBA.**

and veneration with which the priests and Levites performed their part in the worship. The whole she beheld struck her mind with the most sensible impression, and, in the height of her amazement, she addressed the king in words to this effect: "Great Prince, said she, report is so doubtful and uncertain, that without an experimental and demonstrative confirmation of the truth of what we hear, we are forced to suspend our judgment, especially when the fame of things relates either to extreme good or evil; but with respect to your incomparable faculties, that is, to the advantages of the mind in a superlative degree of knowledge and understanding, and the glory of your outward state, the rumour has been so far from partial, that it falls short even of common justice; for though report conveyed as much to your honour as words could express, I have yet the happiness, at this present time, to see much more than I heard. Blessed are the Israelites, blessed are the friends and people of Solomon, that stand ever before him, and hear his wisdom; and blessed be God for his goodness to this land and nation, in placing them under the government of so excellent a prince."

Nor did this great princess testify her admiration of the extraordinary qualifications of Solomon by words alone; but, as a farther instance of the high respect she entertained for the king, made him a present of one hundred and twenty talents of gold, together with a great quantity of aromatic spices, rich perfumes, and precious stones, to a considerable value. Solomon, on his part, was not wanting in making a grateful acknowledgment of the favours then conferred on him: he not only gave the queen all she asked, but complimented her with several articles which he thought attracted her fancy. After this reciprocal interchange of presents given and taken, the queen of Sheba took her leave, and returned, highly satisfied, to her own country.

Soon after the departure of the Queen of Sheba, Solomon's fleet returned from Ophir, (otherwise called the land of Gold) bringing rich stones and pine wood in abundance: the latter was made use of partly for pillars and supporters to the temple and palace, and partly in the construction of psalteries, harps and cymbals, on which the Levites played when they sang to the praise and glory of God.

Solomon received by this fleet six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, over and above the merchants adventure, and what the governors and princes of Arabia sent him for presents. Of this gold he caused to be made two hundred targets, each weighing six hundred shekels, all of which he hung up in the great hall of the Forest of Lebanon. He likewise made a most superb and grand throne of ivory, which he used both as the seat of judgment and to hold public audiences. It was placed in the midst of a flight of rich pillars of cedar, curiously carved, and inlaid with gold. The throne itself, which was in the form of a niche, was covered with ivory, inlaid, and intermixed with curious or-

naments in gold: the ascent to it was by six steps, each supported on either side by a small lion, and the arms of the seat by two large ones as big as the life. All these, and even the steps themselves, were covered with ivory and gold. The drinking-vessels belonging to the king were all of gold, decorated with precious stones, and curiously wrought by the most eminent artists; and of this rich metal were all his common utensils made. In the traffic carried on, no money passed; Solomon sending his own ships, from the sea of Tarshish, with different articles of his own country, and receiving in exchange negroes, gold, silver, ivory, apes, &c. This voyage, in going and returning, usually took up three years.

The great fame of Solomon's wisdom, power and riches having now extended to the remotest parts, several of the most potent princes embraced every opportunity of testifying, by their submission and munificence, the veneration in which they held so distinguished a character. They sent him gold and silver, plate, purple robes, spices and perfumes of all sorts, horses, chariots, and mules for burthen, such as, for strength and beauty, they thought would be most acceptable to the king. In short, the richest presents were sent him from every quarter; and to see the face, and hear the wisdom, of the renowned Solomon, was the prevailing ambition of the great men of that age.

Hitherto we have seen nothing in Solomon but what was truly great and wonderful; but the latter actions of his life greatly tarnish and disgrace his character. His raging desires after women transported him beyond all bounds; nor could those of his own country serve his turn, for he took indifferently women of various nations, Sidonians, Tyrians, Ammonites, Edomites, &c. contrary to the institution of Moses, which forbid any intercourse of marriage with strangers, wisely foreseeing that strange women might inveigle them over to worship strange gods. This was the true reason of the precaution against such marriages; for the violation of one law is but a step towards the breaking of another; and the taking of a prohibited wife naturally led to the embracing of a prohibited religion.

But Solomon's sensual appetite was not to be checked by the counsels of sobriety and reason. He had no less than seven hundred wives, who were princesses, and three hundred concubines; and the passion he had for the personal charms of some, and the conversation of others, led him into compliance with them in the impiety of their practices and opinions, as the most effectual earnest he could give of his tenderness and affection. As he grew more advanced in years he felt the decay of age in his mind, as well as in his body, and as he became more and more remiss in the exercise of the true worship, he was the more easily prevailed upon to join with these strange women in a false one; and even went so far as to assist them in offering up sacrifices to their respective idols †.

This sad apostacy in Solomon highly offended the

† It is astonishing that a person of Solomon's wisdom

should have been persuaded by his wives to forsake the religion in

the Almighty, who was pleased to send a prophet to him with a message to this effect: "That his wickedness was no secret, and that he should not long go unpunished. With respect to the promise made to his father, that he should have no other successor, the prophet told him his government should not be taken from him while he was living; but that after his death his son should suffer for the iniquities of his father; not that there should be an universal defection, but that ten tribes only should revolt, and the other two continue in their allegiance to the son of Solomon for his grandfather's sake, and for the sake of the temple of Jerusalem, which God had made choice of for the place of his habitation on earth."

This severe chastisement, which foretold the removal of Solomon from the most exalted glory and dignity, to the lowest state and condition, wounded him to the very soul; nor could he, on reflection, deny the justice of the sentence.

A very short time after this dreadful judgment was denounced against Solomon for his transgressions, God stirred up a bitter enemy against him. His name was Hadad, an Edomite by birth, and a branch of the royal family, whose animosity against Solomon arose from the following circumstances. When the Israelites overran the country of Edom, under the command of Joab, who at that time was David's general, Joab, having subdued the people, put to the sword all the male children he could find in the province. Hadad was at this time a youth, and happening to make his escape, fled to Pharaoh king of Egypt who not only received him with great humanity, but very generously gave him houses, lands and revenues for his support; and such was his affection for him that he at length gave him his own wife's sister in marriage, who bore him a son that was trained up with the children of Pharaoh.

When Hadad heard of the deaths of David and Joab, he asked permission of Pharaoh to return to his own country. The king, not being pleased with this request, asked him, what he wanted, or what he meant by so earnestly wishing to leave the best friend he had in the world. Hadad told him he was perfectly satisfied with all the favours he had been pleased to bestow on him; but that he was anxiously desirous of pay-

ing a visit to his own country, and therefore begged he would indulge him in his request.

By repeated solicitations, Pharaoh was at length prevailed on to give his assent; upon which Hadad repaired to Edom, with a full design of stirring up the people to a rebellion against Solomon. On his arrival at the place he found the garrisons so strong, and the country in such a posture of defence, that there was no possibility of success by a surprize: he therefore altered his plan, and went from thence into Syria, where he joined interest with one Rezon, a fugitive from his master Hadadezer, the king of Zoab. This person had gathered together a great number of men, over whom he made himself captain, and, with their assistance, seizing on Damascus, he there reigned as king of Syria, and, in conjunction with Hadad, greatly distressed Solomon in the declining part of his reign.

But the most dangerous enemy Solomon had was Jeroboam, the son of Nabat, a bold and enterprising man, whom the king had made overseer of his buildings, and whom, for his great abilities, he had likewise appointed chief ruler of the House of Joseph; that is, of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh.

As Jeroboam was one day walking in the fields he was met by the prophet Ahijah, who, taking hold of his garment, which was new, rent it into twelve pieces, ten of which he bid him take, and then addressed him as follows: "Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel: Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee: but he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel. Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth, the goddesses of the Zidonians; Chemosh, the god of the Moabites; and Milcom, the god of the children of Ammon; and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father. Howbeit, I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand: but I will make him prince all the days of his life, for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments."

in which he had been so well instructed, and which he was so fully convinced to have been delivered to Moses by that Omnipotent Being, who had brought the Israelites from a land of bondage, placed him on the throne of David, and inspired him with that wisdom which rendered him famous throughout the earth. It affords, however, a striking lesson to all mankind to beware of the infatuation of vice; since even a Solomon was not secure from its delusions, and, once unhappily immersed in it, seems never to have disengaged himself from it.

§ Language, as appears from the nature of the thing, from the records of history, and from the remains of the most antient languages still subsisting, was at first exceeding rude, narrow and equivocal; so that men were perpetually at a loss on any new conception, or uncommon incident, to explain themselves intelligibly to each other. This necessarily set them upon supplying the deficiencies of speech by apt and significant signs. Accordingly, in the first ages of the world, mutual converse was upheld by a mixed discourse of words and actions (hence came the eastern phrase, Exod. iv. 8. of the voice of the sign) and use and custom, as in most

other affairs of life, improving what had arisen out of necessity into ornament, this practice subsisted long after the necessity was over; especially among the eastern people, whose natural temperament inclined them to a mode of conversation, which so well exercised their vivacity by motion, and gratified it by a perpetual representation of material images. Of this we have innumerable instances in scripture, as well as in the present instance. By these actions the prophets instructed the people in the will of God, and conversed with them by signs: and as it likewise appears that the information by action was, at this time and place, a very familiar mode of conversation, this will lead us to a reasonable and true defence of the prophetic writings, and enable us to clear them from the charge of absurdity and fanaticism. The absurdity of an action consists in its being extravagant and insignificant; but use and a fixed application, made those in question both just and pertinent. The fanaticism of an action consists in a fondness for unusual actions and foreign modes of speech; but these in question were idiomatic and familiar.

"ments and my statutes : But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes. And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light always before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there. And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel. And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that which is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did, that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee. And I will for this afflict the seed of David, though not for ever."

Jeroboam was not a little elated at the words of the prophet; and being naturally of a very haughty and aspiring temper, every thing that contributed to gratify his ambition, made him turbulent and restless. The prophetic prediction was strongly impressed on his mind; and therefore, the first step he took was, to tamper with the people he commanded, and to instill into their minds the spirit of disaffection to their sovereign.

The proceedings of Jeroboam were soon made known to Solomon, who concerted a plan to surprize and dispatch him; but the plot being discovered, he made his escape and fled to Shishak, king of Egypt. Here he continued during the remainder of Solomon's life, who, after

having reigned forty years, died about the 58th year of his age, and was buried in the City of David.

Solomon was certainly the wisest and richest prince that ever existed. He might, indeed have likewise reigned the happiest, had not his inordinate attachment to women hurried him into the commission of such enormities in the sight of God as entailed not only misery on himself, but were also the source of numberless misfortunes that afterwards happened to the people he had been chosen to govern.

The character which the Author of Ecclesiasticus gives of Solomon is exceeding beautiful, and pity it is that it should be so stained by the impropriety of his conduct during the latter part of his life. "Solomon, says he, reigned in a peaceable time, and was honoured, for God made all quiet round about him, that he might build an house in his name, and prepare his sanctuary for ever. How wise wast thou in thy youth, and, as a flood, filled with understanding! Thy soul covered the whole earth, and thou filledst it with dark parables. Thy name went far unto the islands, and for thy peace thou wast beloved. The countries marvelled at thee for thy songs and proverbs, and parables and interpretations. By the name of the Lord, who is called the Lord God of Israel, thou didst gather gold as tin, and didst multiply silver as lead.—But thou didst bow thy loins to women, &c." See Eccles. xlvii. 13, &c.

C H A P. II.

Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, succeeds to the government. He refuses the advice of his fathers counsellors; upon which ten of the tribes revolt, and make Jeroboam king. Jeroboam seduces the people into idolatry. His hand suddenly withereth, but is restored at the instigation of a prophet. The same prophet, for his disobedience, is slain by a lion. Jeroboam's wickedness, and the death of his son Abijah. Shishak, king of Egypt, besieges Jerusalem, and plunders the temple. Death of Rehoboam. Alijah, the son of Rehoboam, succeeds to the government of Judah. He obtains a considerable victory over Jeroboam, but soon after dies. He is succeeded by his son Asa, a very good prince, who, after gaining a victory over the king of Arabia, makes a thorough reformation in religion. Death of Asa. Of the different kings who governed the ten tribes during the reigns of Rehoboam, Abijah, and Asa.

ON the death of Solomon, the government of the people fell of course to his son Rehoboam, who immediately repaired to Shechem, in order to declare himself the successor to the throne, under the sanction of the unanimous suffrages of the people. Jeroboam, at the time of Solomon's death, was in Egypt, and being strongly urged, by some of the grandees, to return, he took their advice, and with all possible expedition hastened to Shechem. On his arrival he joined many of the princes and leading people in an application to Rehoboam, whom they advised to adopt a mild government, observing that, in some instances, Solomon had been rather oppressive; and that instead of rendering himself an object of terror to his subjects, his safety and happiness required him to

regulate his conduct in such a manner as to obtain an acquiescence to the measures of his government from an unfeigned affection to his person, rather than from a dread of his power.

Rehoboam told them to depart, and that in three days he would give them an answer. This circumstance occasioned a jealousy among the people, who considered that an immediate compliance with so reasonable a request would not have been refused by a prince disposed to promote the happiness of his subjects. They reflected however, that the suspension did not imply an absolute denial, and therefore waited the event with favourable expectations.

In consequence of this general application, Rehoboam summoned together the counsellors and friends of his late father, and requested their

advice in what reply he should make to the people. They recommended it to him by all means to treat them with courtesy and condescension, assuring him that he would gain much more upon them by a popular freedom, than confining himself to the formalities of majesty and state, there being nothing so likely to fix a tie on the hearts of the people, as affability and condescension in the prince.

Words could not have been formed more to the purpose in general, or more especially to Rehoboam's purpose in particular, having a kingdom at view, than these. But so infatuated was this young prince with the thoughts of his new station, that, rejecting the wholesome counsel given him, he applied to some persons of his own age and disposition, resolving to abide by their opinions and sentiments. The answer they advised him to give the people was to this effect: "That they should feel more weight from his little finger than they had done from the loins of his father: that if they had been oppressed before, the oppression should be increased; and that if whips were the instruments of chastisement made use of by his predecessor, he would himself inflict a more painful discipline by chastising them with scorpions."

In the utmost anxiety of hope and fear, the people assembled on the third day; when the king delivered his answer to them precisely in the words which the young men had recommended. In consequence of this they immediately threw off their allegiance, and unanimously cried out, *What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David.*

When Rehoboam understood this, he sent Adoram, the Collector, to appease the people, and, probably, to assure them that their taxes should be abated: but this pacification came too late; their passions were raised to such a degree, that, without permitting Adoram to use any exculpatory arguments, they immediately fell on him, and stoned him to death. Rehoboam, seeing this, thought it high time to consult his own safety, by hastening to his chariot and flying to Jerusalem; by which means he secured the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, but all the rest of the Israelites made choice of Jeroboam, declaring they would never again acknowledge the sovereignty of a descendant of David. Thus was this great kingdom divided into two parts,

|| It was a custom among the kings of the east to have their sons educated among other young lords of the same age; which, as it created a generous spirit of emulation, and both endeared the prince to the nobles, and the nobles to the prince, could not but tend greatly to the benefit of the public. So that Solomon's method and design in the education of his son was wise, and well concerted, though it failed of success. These young men, however, were not so young but they might have known better, for Rehoboam was one and forty years old when he entered upon the kingdom. So that these nobles who were brought up with him must have been about the same age; but they were young in experience and wisdom, and therefore they gave the king such unseasonable advice.

* This prophet was very well known in the reign of Rehoboam. He is supposed to have written the annals of that prince; and of what authority he was in Judah we may gather from his having so easily prevailed with the king, and

and ever after went under different denominations, namely, the kingdom of Judah, and the kingdom of Israel, though the latter included the whole before.

Rehoboam, fired with indignation at the affront put upon himself in the person of Adoram, his collector, resolved to seek revenge on the disaffected Israelites. As soon therefore as he had got safe into Jerusalem, he summoned a full convention of the two tribes that stood firm to their allegiance, from whom he selected 180,000 choice troops, proposing to himself, with this body of men, to march against the other ten tribes, and, by force, reduce them to obedience. But while he was preparing for this enterprize, he received a visit from the prophet Shemaiah*, who, by the direction of God, advised him to desist from prosecuting his intentions, because it was the Divine will and pleasure that the division of the kingdom should come to pass, that the prediction of the prophet Ahijah might be fulfilled. Rehoboam readily took the advice of Shemaiah, and immediately disbanded his army; after which he built several strong holds in different parts of the country, furnished them with good garrisons and provisions, and erected magazines in several cities within the environs of his capital.

In the mean time Jeroboam enlarged and beautified Shechem, built him a palace, and made it a royal city. He likewise repaired Peniel, a fortified place on the other side the river Jordan, where he likewise built a palace, and to which he frequently resorted in hopes of gaining over the affections of the two tribes that were attached to Rehoboam.

The time was now near at hand for celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles, upon which Jeroboam reflected that if his people should repair to Jerusalem to celebrate that festival, the ceremonies of religion might so far operate on their minds as to induce them to acknowledge allegiance to his antagonist, whereby both his life and government would be in the most imminent danger. In consequence of this reflection, he set up two golden calves, with altars belonging to them, the one in Bethel, which was the most southern, and the other in Dan, which was the most northern part of the country. Having done this he summoned together the heads of the ten tribes under his command at the two different places, and shewing them the images, addressed them as follows†: *It is too much for you*

180,000 men, to lay down their arms and return home, merely by declaring that the division which had happened was by the order and appointment of God.

† The words Josephus puts into Jeroboam's mouth, on this occasion, are to the following effect: "It is unnecessary, my friends and countrymen, to mention the Omnipresence of the Deity: in whatever place we are, he hears and accepts the prayers we offer him. I therefore conceive that, for the exercise of your religion, it will be totally needless to undertake a tedious journey to Jerusalem. The builder of the temple was but a mortal like ourselves: the golden calves which are placed in the temples at Bethel and Dan, have been consecrated as well as the temple at Jerusalem. You will be at no loss for the want either of priests or Levites; let such as are inclined to execute the sacerdotal function qualify themselves by sacrificing a calf and a ram, by which ceremony alone Aaron, the first of the order, was initiated into the priesthood."

you to go up to Jerusalem: Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

The people in general were by these means seduced, from their obedience to the true worship of God, but the regular priests would not give their assent to such idolatries. In consequence of this, Jeroboam inhibited them the exercise of their own religion, banished them his kingdom, and appointed any, who were so inclined, to take the sacerdotal office, and officiate in their stead. By these means a great accession of strength accrued to Rehoboam's party, for the priests that were banished resorted all to Jerusalem, and were followed by as many of the other tribes as had any regard to the true worship of God.

As the Feast of Tabernacles was held at Jerusalem on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, so Jeroboam appointed a feast to be held at Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month †. To give the better countenance to his new-invented religion, he officiated himself, assuming the character of high-priest. He was attended by all the new priests he had appointed, and having gone through the different ceremonies according to the form of the temple worship, proceeded at length to that of the sacrifice; but just as he was about to put fire to the offering, he was interrupted by a prophet § from Jerusalem. This prophet, having made his way through the people up to the altar, loudly exclaimed as follows: O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord: "*Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and mens bones shall be burned upon thee.*" That no doubt might be entertained of the truth of this prediction, the prophet farther said, *this is the sign which the Lord hath spoken, Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out.*

This speech from the prophet so incensed Jeroboam, that, stretching out his hand, he ordered the people who stood by to seize him; but, at that instant, his hand became so stiff and benumbed that he could not pull it back again. At the same time, the altar split asunder, and the fire and ashes that were on it fell to the ground.

Jeroboam, being convinced that the prophet had been actuated by a spirit of inspiration, saw his own impiety, and earnestly requested him to supplicate the Almighty for the restoration of his withered hand. The prophet readily complied with this request, and Jeroboam, having

recovered the perfect use of his limb, made grateful acknowledgments for the miraculous cure he had received, and strongly pressed his benefactor to stay and take some refreshment with him. But this invitation the prophet declined, saying, *If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread, nor drink water in this place. For so was it charged me by the word of the Lord, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest.* This abstinence and reserve of the prophet induced the king to be more attentive to what he had predicted than he otherwise would have been; and his anxiety increased as he continued to reflect on the event.

It happened at this time that there lived in Bethel a very old prophet, who, by the flattering events which he pretended would come to pass, had highly ingratiated himself in the favour of Jeroboam. The old prophet being informed by his sons of the miracles which the Man of God from Judah had wrought, became so jealous of being supplanted in his interest with the king, that, notwithstanding he was oppressed with the infirmities of age and sickness, he arose from his bed, and, being mounted on his ass, rode in quest of the stranger, whom he overtook while he was resting himself under the shade of an oak tree. The usual salutation being exchanged, the old prophet complained of the unkindness of the stranger in not having called at his habitation for refreshment, and strongly entreated him to return and eat with him. The young prophet refused his request, giving him the same reason for it as he had done to Jeroboam. The other made answer, that the prohibition did not extend to him, for that he was himself a prophet, and sent by the express direction of God to give him an invitation to dinner. Not suspecting any treachery, the young prophet was prevailed on to return; and while they were seated at table, and engaged in the freedom of conversation, a vision suddenly appeared, when a voice, addressed to the young prophet, spoke as follows: *Thus saith the Lord; forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord, and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord thy God commanded thee, but camest back, and hast eaten bread, and drank water in the place of the which the Lord did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers.*

It was not long before this dreadful sentence was put in execution. As the young prophet was on his way to Jerusalem, he was suddenly attacked by a lion who instantly dispatched him; but, when he had so done, he neither tore his body,

† It is the opinion of some that as the Feast of Tabernacles was appointed by God to be observed after gathering in of the fruits, which might be sooner ripe than in the northern parts of the country, so Jeroboam might pretend that the eighth month would be a better time for it than the seventh, because then they would be gathered in all parts. Others imagine he might have this farther design in the alteration of the month, namely, that the people of Judah, when their own feast was over a month before at Jerusalem, might, if their curiosity led them, have the opportunity of coming to his. But the plain case is, that he did every thing he could in opposition to the established religion, and his chief intent was, to alienate the people from Rehoboam.

§ Commentators are not agreed who this prophet was, neither is there any foundation for so much as a conjecture; the prophecy, however, is one of the most remarkable in sacred writ. It foretels an action that exactly came to pass above three hundred and forty years afterwards. It describes the circumstances of the action; and specifies the very name of the person who was to do it; and therefore every Jew who lived in the time of its accomplishment must have been convinced of the Divine authority of a religion, founded upon such prophecies as this; since none but God could foresee, and consequently none but God could foretel, events at such a distance.

body, nor did the least injury to the ass on which he rode. When the old prophet understood what had happened he immediately went to the spot, and laying the body on his ass, took it to Bethel, and there buried it in his own sepulchre. Having done this, he gave a strict charge to his family, that whenever he died they should lay his body as near that of this prophet's as possible; saying, he was confident that what he had foretold concerning the altar of Bethel, and that form of idolatry which Jeroboam had set up, would most certainly come to pass.

A short time after this it happened that Abijah, the son of Jeroboam, a young prince of very promising hopes, fell sick; upon which Jeroboam ordered his wife to dress herself as a person in a private station, and go to the prophet Ahijah at Shiloh, (who had formerly predicted that he should himself obtain the royal dignity) and enquire of him the fate of the child. The prophet was at this time blind, and therefore Jeroboam thought it would be no difficult matter to impose on him, and that he would imagine the queen to be no other than a common woman.

In conformity to Jeroboam's orders, his wife, having disguised herself in a proper manner, set out on her journey to Shiloh, in order to make enquiry of the prophet concerning the fate of their darling son. Before she arrived at the place Ahijah was addressed by a voice from heaven, informing him that the woman was coming to his house, and on what occasion: what questions she would put to him, and what answers he should return. Accordingly, when the queen came to the door of Ahijah's house, he said to her, *Come in thou wife of Jeroboam: why feignest thou thyself to be another? for I am sent to thee with heavy tidings.* He then bid her return immediately home, and deliver to her husband a message he had received from God, the substance of which was to this effect. *Thus saith the Lord God of Israel:* "As I deprived the house of David of the regal authority, and from a mean station in life exalted thee to the dignity of a throne; and as thou hast, with the greatest ingratitude, deserted me, and impiously put up gods of thy own invention, made by the hands of men, and preferred them before the Creator of the universe, I will therefore extirpate thee and thy house from the face of the earth, and give the carcases of thy people to be eaten by dogs and the birds of the air. Another king shall be in thy stead, who shall not suffer one man of thy

family to remain alive, nor shall the people themselves avoid punishment, for they shall be driven out of the land they inhabit, and be scattered beyond the Euphrates, for imitating thy wickedness, and worshipping thy gods in contempt of me, and what I have commanded."

The prophet having given the queen this message to deliver to her husband from God, bid her hasten home, and inform him of it as soon as possible. He likewise told her, with respect to the child, that it should expire the very instant she entered the city.

With this doleful message, and melancholy tidings, the queen left Ahijah, and no sooner did she arrive at her home than she found the prophet's prediction strictly verified, for the child a very short time before, had given up the ghost. After her first grief had a little subsided she delivered the message to her husband as delivered to her by the prophet, and related every particular that had passed between them.

But all these judgments, and miraculous events, wrought no reformation in the wicked Jeroboam. He continued to erect altars in high places, and to ordain priests from the lowest classes of the people; and instead of endeavouring to deprecate the judgment threatened, used every means he could to promote and establish idolatry.

Nor was his rival Rehoboam, king of Judah, much better. For three years, indeed, he kept up the true worship of God at Jerusalem, but it was more from a principle of state policy, than of true religion. When the time of Jeroboam's subjects coming over to him on that account was at an end, he threw off the mask, and discovered his inclinations towards idolatry; and, as his example was followed by his subjects, they soon forsook the worship of the true God, and carried their idolatrous practices to the most extravagant height. They not only built them high places, and images, and groves, on every high hill, but, to add to their gross impiety, introduced every detestable act of wickedness for which the antient Canaanites had been so justly expelled.

As a punishment for this defection, the Almighty was pleased, in the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign, to send against him and his people Shishak, king of Egypt. This prince invaded his dominions with a very numerous army, and having ravaged the country, taken most of the fortified places, and entered Jerusalem without opposition, ransacked the temple and palace of their

|| The most probable reason why Jeroboam chose to send his wife on this errand is, because it was a secret not to be intrusted to any one else: a secret, which, had it been divulged, might have endangered his whole government; because, if once his subjects came to understand that he himself had no confidence in the calves which he had set up; but, in any matter of importance, had recourse to true worshippers of God, it is not to be imagined what an inducement this would have been for them to have forsaken those senseless idols, and to have returned to the worship of the God of Israel, whom they had imprudently forsaken. The queen, therefore, was the only person in whom he could place confidence on this occasion. As a mother, he knew that she would be diligent in her enquiry, and, as a wife, faithful in her report. He might have several reasons for ordering her

to disguise herself. Though Shiloh lay within the confines of Ephraim, yet there is great reason to believe that it was subject to the house of David, and belonged to the house of Judah: and therefore Jeroboam thought it not safe to venture his queen in a place under his rival's government, without putting her in some disguise. He knew likewise that the prophet Ahijah was greatly offended at him for the idolatry he had introduced, and therefore thought (as justly he might) that if the prophet knew her to be his wife, he would either not tell her any thing, or make things much worse than they were. The way, therefore, to come at the truth was, as he thought, to do what he did: but herein appears his infatuation; that he should not think the person whom he deemed capable of resolving him in the fate of his son, able to see through this guile and disguise.

their rich furniture and moveables; took away all the money that was found in the king's treasury, as also the treasure of the sanctuary, and, at the same time, carried off the golden shields that had been made by Solomon: instead of which, by this depredation, Rehoboam was reduced so low as to be obliged to make brazen ones for the use and ornaments of his guards.

After this transaction we have little or nothing more recorded of Rehoboam, only that he reigned twelve years longer over Judah; that he had eighteen wives, and threescore concubines, by whom he had twenty-eight sons and threescore daughters: that he appointed Abijam (who was his eldest son by his favourite wife Maachah) to succeed him on the throne: and that, after a continued contest with his rival Jeroboam, he died in the 58th year of his age, in the seventeenth of his reign, and was buried in the City of David.

Abijam succeeded his father in the kingdom of Judah in the eighteenth year of the reign of Jeroboam, king of Israel. Though young, he was a prince of a very martial spirit, and therefore resolved, if possible, to put an end to the dispute that had so long subsisted between the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel. For this purpose he raised an army of 400,000 men, and marched against Jeroboam, whose forces were double that number. As soon as the two armies were drawn up in order of battle, Abijam, placing himself on an eminence, in the hearing of the Israelitish army, addressed them in a long speech*, in which he pointed out the injustice of their cause in revolting from his father Rehoboam; the right he claimed on his side, since God had given the whole kingdom to David, and his posterity; and the reasonable expectation he had of the Divine assistance in what he was going about, since the religion of Jeroboam was false and idolatrous; whereas he, and the men of Judah, had the pure worship of the living

God, his temple, and his ordinances, among them.

So far was Jeroboam from being solicitous to make any reply in answer to Abijam's exhortation, that, even before he had done speaking, he ordered a detachment to march round, and intercept his retreat. The troops of Abijam were greatly alarmed at this proceeding; but their leader encouraged them to preserve their fortitude, exhorting them to depend on the protection of the Almighty, who would render abortive the most consummate treachery, levelled against the righteous cause which they were engaged to support. This revived their courage, and they addressed themselves in prayer to God for success, till the signal was given for beginning the battle, when, with loud shouts, they attacked the enemy with such vigour, that they were soon defeated, and no less than 500,000 men were slain in the action.

Abijam improved this victory by pursuing Jeroboam, and taking from him so many strong cities (among which was Bethel, where he had lately set up one of the golden calves) that he was never after able to make head against his adversary, who, by this, and some other successful achievements, grew great and powerful.

Had Abijam lived long, he might, probably, have reduced the Israelites to a total subjection; but his government was very short, for, after reigning not quite three years, he paid the debt of nature, and was buried among his ancestors in the City of David †.

Abijam was succeeded by his son Aza, who came to the throne in the twentieth year of the reign of Jeroboam, king of Israel. This prince was of a very different temper to that of his father. As he enjoyed the felicity of a settled peace for the ten first years of his reign, he wisely made use of his time in removing the abominable vices which had been introduced among the people. He broke down their idols, and

* The speech Josephus puts into Abijam's mouth, on this occasion, is to the following effect: "It is impossible, said he, you can have forgot that God has promised that David and his posterity shall rule this kingdom. I am therefore surprized to find my father forsaken, and his subject Jeroboam put in his stead, as well as to see that you have taken up arms against a government which God has established; and that you cannot be satisfied without driving the legal possessor from what small portion is still remaining under his jurisdiction: for Jeroboam has already usurped authority over the greatest part of the kingdom. The Almighty, however, will not suffer him long to possess what he has so wickedly obtained, but will severely punish him for his crimes, and cause those rapacious and oppressive measures to cease, which, instead of endeavouring to terminate, he employs his constant attention to aggravate. What cause can be assigned for this falling off? You never received any injurious treatment from my father: once, indeed, incited by evil counsel (of which Jeroboam was the principle cause) he unhappily made use of an improper expression, on which every one of you departed in a rage, not only relinquishing allegiance to your sovereign, but your duty to God. You ought to have proceeded with deliberation, and have judged more favourably of that weakness which is incident to all mankind; you should also have reflected on my father's youth, and that he did not affect to be endowed with any excellent gift of speech; you should have considered him also as the son of Solomon, from whom you had received such signal obligations. I should have

supposed that all these considerations might have induced you to excuse an hasty expression; and, on the father's account, it would have been no more than an act of justice to have made some allowance for the son. But it is evident you never considered these things, nor is it probable you will, if I may form my judgment from the forces now before us. In what is your ultimate resource fixed? It cannot surely be in your golden figures of calves, your altars and high places! You confide in your evil deeds, and not in your religious practices. You act in opposition to every law both Divine and human: against both of these you militate in taking up arms against us, who have always worshipped the true God, not an idol carved from stone or wood, and imposed upon a weak and silly multitude, by the impiety of their prince, but God the Creator of heaven and earth, who is the primary and ultimate cause of all things. Repent, therefore, of the wickedness you have committed, and follow better courses hereafter; or, if you are determined to contend, let it be for the protection of those laws from which you derive your present greatness and felicity."

† The reason some assign for God's shortening the days of Abijam is, his not having destroyed idolatry, when, by taking of Bethel, he had it in his power. And, indeed, however he might plead his possession of the temple and priesthood, to make his argument good against Jeroboam, yet the character which the sacred historian gives him is far from being respectful: *He walked says he, in all the sins of his father; nor was his heart perfect with the Lord his God, as the heart of his great grandfather David.*

and demolished their altars in all the cities of Judah; but he had not yet power and authority sufficient to destroy the high places. The vessels of silver and gold, which both he and his father had consecrated to the service of the temple, he presented to the priests; and, by all the enforcements of regal authority, compelled his subjects to pay a proper attention both to their civil and religious duties.

During this time of peace he fortified several cities on the frontier parts of his kingdom. He likewise trained up the greater part of his subjects in the art of war; insomuch that, in a short time, he had an army of 300,000 men of Judah armed with shields and spikes, and 280,000 men of Benjamin armed with shields and arrows, all of whom were men of true courage, and firmly resolved to hazard their lives in defence of their country.

Towards the latter end of the tenth year of Afa's government, Zerah, king of Ethiopia, invaded Judea with an army consisting of ten hundred thousand foot, and three hundred chariots. On his arrival at a place called Mareslah, Afa marched with his army against him, and encamped in the valley of Zephathah, at a small distance from the enemy. When Afa beheld the formidable power of Zerah, he invoked the aid of the Almighty, declaring that he had taken up arms only through the confidence he reposed in him, and that his assistance would more than compensate for the inferiority of numbers, and every other disadvantage. *Lord, said he, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God: let no man prevail against thee.*

These humble solicitations were not in vain, for as soon as the battle began, God struck the Ethiopians with such a sense of fear that they immediately gave way, advantage of which being taken by the army of Afa, prodigious numbers of the enemy were killed on the spot, and the rest fled with the utmost precipitation. Afa and his army closely pursued them, killed many in the flight, took the spoil of their camp, carried away their cattle, smote the cities that were in league with them, and then returned in triumph to Jerusalem.

When Afa had got within a small distance of the city, he was met by Azariah the prophet, who, having commanded him to halt, addressed him in words to this effect: "It hath, said he, pleased the Almighty, on account of your virtues, to give you this signal victory, and if you proceed in a similar discharge of your duty in future, you may be assured that success will attend all your undertakings: but if otherwise, you will suffer the most dreadful

"calamities; you cities will be razed, and your people dispersed throughout the earth, without having any fixed place of residence. Exercise yourselves, therefore, in acts of piety before it is too late, and unanimously offer up your thanks to God for the happiness you at present enjoy."

In consequence of this address from the prophet, Afa had no sooner got to Jerusalem, than he set about measures for totally extirpating idolatry, and recovering the true worship of God among his people. He destroyed all the idols that were to be found, not only in Judah and Benjamin, but in all the countries he had conquered likewise. He repaired the altar of burnt-offerings, and summoned not only natives, but strangers also, to the worship of the true God. On a festival which he had appointed, he ordered seven hundred oxen, and seven thousand sheep (part of the spoil which he had taken from the Ethiopians) to be sacrificed; and at the same time engaged in a covenant with his subjects (which was confirmed by oath) that whoever forsook the true worship of God should, according to the law of Moses, be put to death.

Maachah, the grand-mother of Afa, had been a patroness of idolatry; and therefore, to shew his impartiality, he removed her from court, and prohibited her from coming near the queen for fear of infecting her; and understanding she had set up an idol, he caused that, as well as the grove in which it was placed, to be burnt, and the ashes thrown into the brook Kidron.

At this time Baasha was king of Israel, and the great fame of Afa in bringing about a reformation in religion, together with the blessings wherewith God had hitherto distinguished his reign, being made known to the subjects of Baasha, they threw off their idolatry, and came over in great numbers to Jerusalem. As soon as Baasha perceived this he resolved, if possible, to put a stop to it; to do which he fortified Ramah, a town belonging to the tribe of Benjamin, and which was so conveniently situated, that, by keeping a garrison there, he could prevent all people from passing to and fro without leave, and thereby cut off all communication between his people and those of Judah.

When Afa understood the measures taken by Baasha, he considered it as prelude only to farther innovations, and therefore resolved to stop his progress before it was too late. To effect this he took all the silver and gold that was in the temple †, as well as what was found in his own exchequer, and sent it as a present to Benhadad, king of Syria, requesting his assistance against Baasha. So considerable a bribe could not well fail of having its wished-for effect; and therefore Benhadad set about the measures for which

† In cases of extreme danger, it was always held lawful to employ sacred things in the service of one's country; but there was no such necessity in this case. God had appeared wonderfully in Afa's defence against an enemy much more powerful than Baasha was; nay, he had promised him his protection at all times, and success in all his undertakings, if he would but adhere to his service; and yet, forgetting all this, he strips the temple of its treasure, and bribes an heathen

prince to come to his assistance, and break his league to another to whom he stood engaged: so that here were three offences in this one act of Afa. 1. He alienated things consecrated to God without necessity. 2. He did this out of a carnal fear, and a distrust of that God, whose power and goodness he had lately experienced: and 3. He did it with an ill intent to hire Benhadad, in breach of his league and covenant with Baasha.

which it was offered. He immediately attacked several cities belonging to the Israelites with such success, that Baasha was forced to abandon his design of fortifying his frontier towns towards Judah, in order to defend the other parts of his kingdom that were thus furiously invaded. Afa availed himself of this opportunity, by demolishing the works raised by Baasha at Ramah, with the materials of which he built Geba and Mizpah.

The conduct of Afa in applying to Benhadad for assistance, on this occasion, was certainly very inexcusable. It evidently implied a distrust of God's power or goodness to help him, and therefore the prophet Hanani was sent to reprove him for it. But, instead of receiving his reproofs with temper and thankfulness, he was so exasperated, that he put the prophet in chains, and gave orders for the execution of several of his subjects.

Afa, towards the close of his life, grew very peevish and passionate, and was uneasy with all about him. This change of temper was greatly enhanced by his being violently afflicted with a disorder in his feet (probably what we call the gout) which, at length, rising upwards, put a period to his life in the 41st year of his reign. Instead of being buried, as the manner of the Jews was, his body was burnt with great quantities of perfumes and spices, after which his bones and ashes were collected together, and buried in a sepulchre which he had provided for himself in the City of David.

Afa was succeeded in the government of Judah by his son Jehoshaphat; but before we proceed to recount the transactions of his reign, we must take some notice of the occurrences and revolutions that took place among the kings of Israel.

In the first or second year of Afa's reign died Jeroboam, of some acute distemper, which the Scripture does not specify. His reign was famous (or rather infamous) for the revolt of the ten tribes, the public institution of idolatry, and the terrible defeat which Abijam gave him, and which he himself appears not long to have survived.

Jeroboam was succeeded by his son Nadab who imitated his father in all his wickedness; but his reign was not long. In less than two years he was treacherously killed by Baasha, his captain-general, who usurped the crown, and, to maintain himself in that usurpation, put every one that was related to his predecessor, to death. This was certainly a very wicked and barbarous act, though it produced the accomplishment of the prophecy which Ahijah had denounced against the house of Jeroboam.

He reigned twenty-four years, during which he was guilty of the greatest tyranny and oppression, and paid so little attention to his religious duties, as even to turn them into ridicule. For this disobedience Jehu the prophet was sent, by the command of God, to tell him that both he and his whole race should be extirpated, in the same manner as had been the family of Jeroboam. But these threats availed little; he still followed his iniquitous courses, and continued so to do till the time of his death, which happened in the twenty-sixth year of the reign of Afa, king of Judah.

Baasha was succeeded on the throne of Israel by his son Elah, who was as vicious and debauched a prince as his father. But his reign was very short; for, in the second year, while he was carousing in his steward's house, he was assassinated by Zimri, a considerable officer of the house, who, to secure the kingdom to himself, immediately cut off all Baasha's friends and relations, by which was fulfilled the prediction of the prophet Jehu.

Zimri, though he had possessed himself of the throne, was far from being secure on it. He had not, as Baasha did, gained the army (which was then besieging Gibbethon, a city in the hands of the Philistines) over to his interest; so that, when they heard of Elah's death, they declared for Omri their general. In consequence of this he immediately raised the siege, and marching to Tirzah (the then royal city of the Israelites) soon made himself master of it. This so alarmed Zimri, that, seeing all lost, and despairing of any quarter from the enemy, he retired into one of the apartments of the palace, to which he set fire, and the whole building was consumed, himself perishing in the flames, after a reign of only seven days.

Every thing was now in a most embarrassed state, and the nation formed itself into two parties: one faction supported the interest of Omri, and the other declared for Tibni, the son of Ginath. This occasioned a civil war for four years, when Omri, having slain his rival, enjoyed the throne without farther interruption. But his reign must be acknowledged to have been very wicked, when we find it recorded of him, that he not only walked in the ways of Jeroboam, but *did worse than all before him*. He very probably introduced other and more abominable idolatries than had been practised by his predecessors, which are therefore called by the prophet Micah (chap. vi. ver. 16.) *the works of the House of Ab-b*. He compelled the people to worship the golden calves, and, by severe laws (which, in consequence thereof were called the Statutes of Omri) restrained them from going to Jerusalem, and worshipping the true God. During his reign he bought of one Shemer a piece of rising ground, whereon he built a palace for his own habitation, which, in a short time, increasing to a city, was, from the first owner of the place, called in Hebrew Shomeron (but, according to the Greeks, and our translation, Samaria) and was ever after made the place of the king's residence, and the metropolis of the Israelitish kingdom.

Omri paid the debt of nature about three years before Afa king of Judah. He was succeeded by his son Ahab, who, in wickedness, surpassed all his predecessors. But of this prince we shall treat at large in our next chapter, and conclude this with the following observation: That though, while Afa reigned in Judah, Israel was in the hands of seven or eight different princes, viz. Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Tibni, Omri, and Ahab; yet such was their hardness in sin and idolatry, that, in all these changes, not one of them ever thought of returning to the house of David, or paying any attention to the worship of the true God at Jerusalem.

C H A P. III.

Jehoshaphat succeeds to the government of Judah, and endeavours to extirpate idolatry. The wicked reign of Abab, king of Israel. The prophet Elijah foretels a famine, which accordingly comes to pass. The manner of his living in exile, and his interview with Abab. His contest with the priests of Baal, whom he orders to be put to death. He flies on account of the threats of Queen Jezebel, and appoints Elisha to the prophetic office in his stead. Abab defeats Benhadad twice, and at length makes a dishonourable peace with him. Queen Jezebel procures the murder of Naboth, a citizen of Jezreel, for which God threatens Abab and his posterity. Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, assists Abab in the siege of Ramoth-Gilead, where Abab is slain by an arrow. Jehoshaphat's wise government, prosperity and death. He is succeeded by his son Jehoram, who turns out a bloody prince, lives detestably, and dies unlamented. The wicked and inglorious reign of Abaziah king of Israel. The prophet Elijah is translated into heaven, in the presence of his servant Elisha, who succeeds him in the prophetic office. Comparison between the prophet Elijah, John the Baptist, and Our Blessed Redeemer.

ON the death of Aza, his son Jehoshaphat, who was then in the thirty-fifth year of his age, succeeded to the government of Judah. He was a prince possessed of most excellent morals, and in all acts of piety, as well as the reformation of religion, imitated, if not excelled, the former part of his father's reign. The first thing he did after his accession was, to extend his territories, and to establish garrisons in the several cities within his dominions, as well as in those which had been obtained from Jeroboam by his grandfather Abijah. To express his zeal for the service of God, he destroyed all those idolatrous high places, and groves, which had been made in the reign of his father, and were left after his decease. That the people might be properly acquainted with the nature and force of the laws, (of which they had for some time been ignorant) he sent itinerant priests and Levites with letters to the princes of all the principal cities throughout his dominions, as also the heads of each family, requesting that they would receive them kindly, and assist them in expounding the law, and instructing his subjects, as well in the knowledge of their civil as religious duties.

Such judicious proceedings as these, in the infancy of his government, could not fail of gaining over the hearts of the people in general, who, to support the dignity of their sovereign, brought him presents from all quarters. This struck such a terror into his enemies, that instead of entertaining any thoughts of invading his dominions, they quietly submitted to his government. Even the Philistines came voluntarily and paid him a tribute which had been suspended for some years, and the Arabians (whose riches consisted in cattle) sent him annually seven thousand seven hundred rams, and an equal number of he-goats, as an acknowledgment of their homage.

Jehoshaphat, to secure himself in this tranquil state, took particular care to make himself strong in arms, as well as in wealth. He had an army of above eleven hundred thousand men, besides those who were in garrisons, and such fortified places as he had supplied with abundance of all kinds of military stores. In short, he was rich and happy, great and honourable; beloved by his subjects, and revered by his enemies.

But, notwithstanding all this prudence, Jehoshaphat was guilty of an indiscretion of a material nature, namely, marrying his son Jehoram to Athaliah, daughter to Ahab, king of Israel, which both displeased God, and involved him and his family in various embarrassments.

Ahab, king of Israel, who succeeded his father Omri, was one of the most wicked princes, and abominable idolaters, that ever sat on the throne of Israel. He not only continued the worship of the calves, which Jeroboam had set up, but, having married Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of Tyre, to indulge her he introduced that mode of idolatry paid to the idol Baal, built a temple in Samaria, erected an altar, and made a grove, in which were daily committed the most horrid impurities.

As an instance of the daring impiety of the Israelites, while under the government of this wicked king, one Hiel, who lived at Bethel, the famous seat of all idolatry, ventured to rebuild Jericho, in defiance of the curse which Joshua had denounced against any man that should attempt it. But the presumptuous wretch found, to his cost, that Joshua's prediction was verified in him, when he saw his eldest son die as soon as he had begun the work, the rest of his children drop off as he continued it, and, last of all, his youngest son taken away when the whole was completed §.

In order to make the abandoned Israelites sensible

§ The sentence we see here fulfilled was pronounced about four hundred and forty years before, and is a most striking proof of the Divine Prescience, as well as of the authority of those sacred writings which contain so remarkable a prediction. Hiel was probably a professed idolater; and there-

fore, either at the instigation of the court might undertake the rebuilding of Jericho, or in defiance of God, and to let the world see that what was denounced in his name was not of the least significance; but the event proved the contrary, and he met with that punishment due to his presumption.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



I KINGS, XXII. 34.

*AHAB King of Israel SLAIN in his Chariot by an ARROW
at the Battle of Ramoth-gilead.*

fible of the great enormities they daily committed, and how highly offensive their proceedings were to the Divine Majesty, God was pleased to send a message to Ahab by the prophet Elijah ‖, the purport of which was that him and his people should be afflicted with a grievous famine (occasioned by the want of rain) which should last for three successive years.

After Elijah had delivered this message to Ahab, and the Divine threat began to take place, he retired, by the direction of God, to the brook Cherith *, where he concealed himself for some time, during which he was miraculously supplied with food by ravens, which brought him bread and flesh twice every day, and his drink was the water of the brook, near which he had taken up his residence. At length the water of the brook began to fail, upon which God was pleased to provide for his faithful servant Elijah, by directing him to leave that place, and go to Zarephath †, where he had appointed a widow woman to receive and furnish him with every necessary refreshment.

In obedience to the Divine commands, Elijah set out on his journey for Zarephath, whither the famine had not only spread itself, but likewise over the whole country of Sidon, as well as the land of Israel. When the prophet came near the town he met the widow, to whom he was directed, gathering sticks; upon which he immediately called to her, desiring that she would fetch him a little water that he might quench his thirst. As the woman was going for the water, Elijah requested that she would also bring with her a morsel of bread. She told him that a handful of meal and a little oil was all she had to keep herself and son from starving, and that she was gathering sticks to bake it into a cake. *As the Lord thy God liveth*, said she, *I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and behold I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in, and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.* But the prophet encouraged her to do as he requested, assuring her that neither her meal or oil should fail during the time of the famine. She accordingly obeyed the prophet, whose words proved strictly true; for though she and her son, together with

Elijah, constantly applied to the barrel of meal and cruse of oil for food, yet they were no sooner diminished than an immediate supply took place. Thus did these three live for the space of two years, near the close of which the woman's son was taken ill and died. This misfortune she attributed to Elijah, saying, *O thou man of God, art thou to come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?* Elijah said to her, *Give me thy son;* and then carrying the body into a private chamber, he earnestly prayed to God that he would be pleased to restore the child to life. This request being complied with, Elijah delivered the child to its mother, saying, *See, thy son liveth;* upon which the woman replied, *Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth ‡.*

After Elijah had lived in this state of obscurity between two and three years, God commanded him to return to the land of Israel, to present himself before Ahab, and inform him that, in a short time, there would be rain fall upon the earth. The famine, at this time, raged with the greatest violence throughout Samaria, insomuch that the people were very near being starved to death. The king was so distressed for want of provender for his cattle that he commanded Obadiah, a principal officer of his household, to go over one half of the country in quest of forage for their subsistence, while himself, attended by a proper number of servants, went over the other part on the same errand. Obadiah was the most religious man of all the king's domestics, and a person naturally possessed of the most tender feelings. As an instance of this, the cruel queen Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, had given orders for persecuting all the prophets of the Lord, upon which Obadiah, at the hazard of his own life, concealed one hundred of them in two caves, fifty in each, and in these places constantly supplied them with every article that was necessary for the preservation of their existence §.

As Obadiah was on his way in search of provender for his master's cattle, he happened to meet with the prophet Elijah, whom he saluted with the greatest respect. The prophet, knowing who he was, desired him to go immediately and acquaint

‖ The prophet Elijah, who, in the New Testament, is commonly called Elias, was a native of Thezbeh, a town on the other side of the Jordan, in the tribe of Gad, and in the land of Gilead. The scriptures do not make any mention either of the quality of his parents, the manner of his education, or his call to the prophetic office. However, he was certainly one of the chief, if not the prince of the prophets of his age; a man of a great and elevated mind, of a generous and undaunted spirit, a zealous defender of the laws of God, and a just avenger of the violations of his honour.

* It is generally agreed that this brook was very near to, and on the west side of, the river Jordan.

† Zarephath, or, as it is called in the New Testament, Sarepta, was a town that lay between Tyre and Sidon, but nearest the latter. Mr. Maundrell observes, that it is the same which is now called Sarphan, about three hours travel from Sidon, in the way to Tyre. It consists at present only of a few houses on the tops of the mountains; but there is reason to believe that the principal part of the city stood in the plain below, because there are still ruins to be seen there of very considerable extent.

‡ The woman certainly had sufficient reason to believe that Elijah was a prophet, or person sent from God, when she saw the miraculous increase of the meal and oil. How-

ever, on his not curing her son when he lay sick, but rather suffering him to die, her faith began to droop; whereas, upon seeing him revive, her faith revived with him, and through the joy of having him again restored to her, she accounted this latter miracle much greater than the former.

§ Elijah, in his appeal to the people, tells them, *I, even I, only remain a prophet of the Lord.* 1 Kings xviii. 22. From this expression we cannot imagine that the hundred prophets, whom Obadiah preserved in the caves, were men actually inspired, and invested with a prophetic character, but such only as were the disciples of the prophets, and candidates for that office. It is not unlikely that, even in Jezebel's time, there were remaining in Israel schools of the prophets, which she endeavoured to destroy, as well as those who were bred up in them, that there might none be left to instruct the people in the true religion. These she certainly looked upon as enemies to her idolatry, and might possibly persuade her husband that they were disaffected to his government, and ~~favourers~~ of the kings of Judah, because they worshipped the same God, and thought that the proper place of his worship was at Jerusalem: and therefore, the greater was the piety and courage of Obadiah, in rescuing to many victims from the hands of this furious and enraged woman.

acquaint the king, that he desired to speak with him, for that he had business to communicate to him of the utmost importance. Obadiah at first excused himself, being fearful that Elijah might vanish before he returned, whereby he should incur the indignation of the king, who had taken the greatest pains to find him out without effect. "In what, said he, have I sinned
 " that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the
 " hand of Ahab to slay me? As the Lord thy
 " God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom
 " whither my Lord hath not sent to seek thee:
 " and when they said, He is not there, he took
 " an oath of the kingdom and nation that they
 " found thee not. And now thou sayest, Go
 " tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here. And it
 " shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from
 " thee, that the Spirit of the Lord shall carry
 " thee whither I know not; and so when I come
 " and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he
 " shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the Lord
 " from my youth. Was it not told my lord,
 " what I did, when Jezebel slew the prophets
 " of the Lord, how I hid an hundred men of
 " the Lord's prophets, by fifty in a cave, and
 " fed them with bread and water? And now
 " thou sayest, Go tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah
 " is here: and he shall slay me."

To remove the fears of Obadiah, Elijah assured him that he would not remove from the place where he was till he went and brought the king to him. *As the Lord of hosts liveth*, said he, *before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him to-day.*

Thus assured, Obadiah went in search of his master, whom he soon found and brought to the place where he had left Elijah, and where, as the prophet had promised, he still remained. At the first interview the king began to upbraid him with being the cause of the calamity under which the nation had so long laboured. But Elijah boldly returned the charge, and having taxed him with the worship of false gods (which was the source of all their woe) he undertook to prove that they were no more than false gods, provided the king would be pleased to summon all the people to meet upon Mount Carmel, and to bring thither the four hundred and fifty priests of Baal, together with the four hundred priests of the groves, who were supported at Jezebel's table.

So fair a proposal could not but be accepted by the king, who accordingly issued out orders for the people to attend, and laid a particular charge that they should bring the priests with

them. When they were all assembled, Elijah, having first upbraided them for their vile perversion in mixing the worship of God and the worship of Baal together, made them a proposal to this effect: "Since, said he, there can
 " be no more than one infinite, supreme, Al-
 " mighty, and independent Being, let us, at this
 " time, make the experiment who this Being is.
 " You, who are the worshippers of Baal, have
 " all the advantages on your side, the favour and
 " protection of the court, four hundred and
 " fifty priests of one kind, and four hundred of
 " another; whereas I, who am the messenger of
 " God's cause, am but one poor banished man;
 " and yet let two oxen be brought before us.
 " Let the priests of Baal choose their ox, dress
 " it, cut it in pieces, and lay it on the altar, but
 " let there be no fire thereon; and I, in like
 " manner, will do so to my ox. Let them pray
 " unto their gods, and I will call on the name of
 " Jehovah; and then let the God, who (by
 " consuming the sacrifice with a sudden flash of
 " fire) shall make it appear that he hath heard
 " the prayers, be owned, by this whole assembly,
 " to be the one, the true, the supreme inde-
 " pendant Being.

This mode of determination being approved of by the multitude, Ahab's priests prepared their altar, laid the ox on it, and called on their idol Baal; but no answer being given they were greatly alarmed, and expressed their surprize by the most uncommon gesticulations, sometimes jumping over the altar, and sometimes dancing round it. In this situation they continued till noon, when no answer being yet given by Baal, the prophet Elijah, to aggravate their perplexities, mocked them, saying, *Cry aloud; for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing; or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked* *. This had the intended effect: they repeated their invocations to the most violent degree, and even went so far (as their custom was when they met with a disappointment) as to cut and slash themselves with knives and lancets, till some of them were near expiring with the loss of blood.

The priests of Baal continued their farce of devotion to their false god to no purpose, till the day was more than half spent, when the prophet Elijah desired them to draw near to him. The people having obeyed his orders, he took twelve stones, according to the twelve tribes, with which he repaired *the Altar of the Lord that had been broken down* †. Having done this he laid his bullock upon the wood and poured a great quantity

* Nothing can be imagined more cutting and sarcastic than these words of the prophet, in which he ridicules in the finest manner possible, their wretched, false, and derogatory ideas of the deity. The two last notions of *being asleep*, and *not at home*, how absurd soever they may be, when applied to the deity, were certainly such as several idolaters conceived of their gods, as appears from various passages in Homer: in one of which, Iliad i. ver. 423. he tells us that Thetis could not meet with Jupiter, because "he was gone abroad, and would not return in less than twelve days;" and at the conclusion of that book he gives us an account of the manner in which the deities went to sleep.

"Then to their starry domes the gods depart.
 The shining monuments of Vulcan's art;

Jove on his couch reclin'd his awful head,
 And Juno slumber'd on his golden bed."

POPE.

What debasing ideas these, compared with that awful intelligence which revelation gives us of a deity, *who neither slumbereth nor sleepeth*; but who, every where present, at all times knows even the secrets of the heart; and is at all times ready to hear, and able to grant, the petitions of his people!

† This altar, which the sacred writer here calls *the Altar of the Lord*, was certainly one of those which were built in the time of the judges and first kings of Israel, when, for want of a fixed place of worship, such structures were permitted. Both Tacitus and Suetonius speak of the God of Carmel

quantity of water three different times on the sacrifice, on the wood, and on the altar, so that the water filled the trench which was dug round the altar to receive it.

It was now about the time of offering the evening sacrifices, when every thing being properly prepared, Elijah approached the altar, fell on his knees, and thus implored the true God: *Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, (said he) let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, bear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their hearts back again.*

No sooner had Elijah finished his prayers to God, than fire immediately descended from heaven, which not only consumed the burnt-offering, but likewise the wood and stones, and even dried up all the water in the trench. This miraculous display of the Divine power so astonished the people, that they immediately fell on their faces, and acknowledged that the God of Elijah was the true God. When the people had a little recovered from their surprize, Elijah ordered them to seize all the priests of Baal, to lead them to the foot of the mountain near the brook Kishon, and there put them to death; which orders being executed, the people dispersed to their respective habitations.

Justice having thus taken place on the impious and false prophets, Elijah again ascended the mount, where, having prayed for some time, he sent his servant to see if he could discover any signs of rain: he accordingly went, but returned with an answer in the negative. Elijah sent him again but with no better success: at length, after going seven times, he brought him word that he saw a small cloud rising out of the sea no bigger, to look at, than a man's hand. In consequence of this intelligence, Elijah ordered his servant to go immediately to Ahab, and advise him to hasten to his chariot, and make the best of his way home, lest he should be prevented by the rain. Ahab took his advice, and the prophet, having properly girded his vest about him, ran all the way before till he came to Jezreel, during which time the clouds gathered very thick, and discharged abundance of water.

As soon as Ahab got home he informed his wife Jezebel of all that had passed, and particularly of Elijah's having put to death the priests of Baal. Fired with resentment at this presumption, the queen vowed revenge against Elijah, and immediately dispatched a messenger to inform him that the next day his life should cer-

tainly pay for theirs. *So let the gods do to me, said she, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them, by to-morrow about this time.*

On the receipt of this message Elijah, thinking himself not safe in Ahab's dominions, immediately withdrew to Beerseba, a town in the southern part of the territories belonging to the tribe of Judah. Here he dismissed his servant, and then pursued his journey into the wilderness of Arabia Petraea. In the evening, being greatly fatigued, he laid himself down under a juniper-tree, sick of the world, and desirous to leave it. *It is enough, said he; now, O Lord, take away my life: for I am not better than my father.* After saying this he fell asleep, but it was not long before he was awoken by an angel, who, bringing him victuals and drink, bade him eat heartily, for that he had a long journey to take. The prophet did as he was ordered, and, with the strength of that repast, walked forty days and forty nights †, till he came to Mount Horeb, the place where God at first delivered the law to Moses.

As soon as Elijah got to the top of Mount Horeb, he betook himself to a cave, intending very probably to spend the remainder of his days in obscurity. But he had not been long in this place before he had a vision, wherein God having first, by several emblems, made him sensible of his Almighty power and presence, gave him to understand, that the number of his true worshippers was greater than he imagined, and that he would not fail to take vengeance on the house of Ahab for their abominable idolatry. To this purpose he ordered him to return into his own country by the way of Damascus, where he was to anoint Hazael, king of Syria; Jehu, king of Israel; and to appoint Elisha as his successor in the prophetic office; intimating thereby that these men would be proper instruments, in his Almighty hand, whereby to punish the idolatry of Israel, and to assert the righteousness of his own cause.

Elijah, being sensibly impressed with what he had seen, as well as the orders enjoined, immediately left Horeb, and proceeded on his way towards Damascus. He had not travelled far before he found Elisha at plough, and, as he passed, threw his mantle § over him: the other understanding this to be a call to the prophetic office, immediately left the plough, ran home, settled the affairs of his family, took his leave of them, and went after Elijah, with whom he lived in the character of a servant during the remainder of his life.

A short time after this Benhadad, king of Syria,

Carmel, whom Vespasian went to consult when he was at Judæa; but they tell us that there was neither temple nor statue upon the mountain, except one altar only, plain, but venerable for its antiquity. The altar of Carmel seems to have had its original from the altar of the true God, which the ancient Hebrews first erected, and Elijah afterwards repaired; and which even the heathens held in such veneration, that when they came to be masters of the country, they would not so much as place an image by it.

† Not that it was forty days journey from Beerseba to Mount Horeb (it being not above four or five days) but Elijah, probably through fear of being apprehended by Jezebel who had vowed his destruction, wandered out of the

way, and by that means made it forty days before he arrived at Mount Horeb.

§ The mantle was the proper habit of a prophet, and therefore Elijah's throwing his upon Elisha was the ceremony here used for his inauguration to the prophetic office; though, as it was customary for servants to carry their master's garments after them, others understand it only as a token that Elisha was to be his servant, to attend upon him, and succeed him in his office. However this be, it is probable that when he threw his mantle over him, he said something whereby he acquainted him with his design, though the particular words in so brief a history are not expressed.

ria, raised a very powerful army, and being joined by thirty-two kings from beyond the Euphrates, he marched into the country of Ahab, king of Israel, and after ravaging some places in his way, laid siege to Samaria, the capital of Ahab's dominions. Benhadad made all the necessary preparations for beginning the attack; but previous thereto he sent a haughty message to Adad, demanding all that belonged to him in satisfaction for some presumed affront, on the giving up of which he promised to raise the siege and withdraw his army: *Thy silver and thy gold, said he, is mine; thy wives also and thy children, even the goodliest, are mine.*

Ahab was in no condition to oppose so powerful an enemy, and therefore tamely submitted himself to his mercy: *My lord, O king, said he, according to thy saying, I am thine, and all that I have.*

But this tameness only increased the insolence of Benhadad, who sent a second message to Ahab, demanding that his servants and officers might, on the following day, search the houses, lodgings, &c. of him and his domestics, and that they should have the liberty of carrying off whatever they thought proper.

Ahab was not so easily reconciled to the compliance of this message as the former. He therefore called a council of his friends, who being assembled, he addressed them in words to this effect: "Benhadad, the king of Syria, said he, has sent me two proposals, by the first of which he agreed to raise the siege, on my acknowledging my silver and gold my wives and children, to be at his disposal; which I consented to, because I would not let any interest of my own supersede the public good. But his second proposal is, that they be permitted to make a general search, and carry off what they please, which is only a pretence to widen the breach between us. They thought, doubtless, that I should remain firm to the first contract: but now they demand a delivery of my people and country, which they may be assured I shall not comply with, and that a war will be the consequence: but I am determined to abide by your advice."

As soon as Ahab had finished his speech the whole council reprobated the insolence of Benhadad, and unanimously declared for war. In consequence of this the answer returned by the ambassadors was, "That the first demand would yet be complied with by the king; but the honour and safety of the citizens required that he should refuse the second."

Benhadad was so mortified at this answer, that he sent Ahab a third message, importing, that he should not trust in the strength of his fortresses, for he would raise works above his walls, which he could easily do by only each of his soldiers contributing a handful of earth. The answer returned by Ahab was, *Let not him that girdeth on*

his harness boast himself, or be that putteth it off.

When Benhadad received this message he was drinking with the thirty-two kings who had joined him; and the contents of it so enraged him, that he immediately ordered his army to prepare themselves for investing the city.

In the mean time Ahab was visited by a prophet, who assured him that God would grant his people a victory over their numerous enemies. Ahab, knowing the small force he had, which consisted only of 7000, besides 232 young men servants to the princes of Israel, and being doubtful of success against so great an army as that of the enemy, asked the prophet, by what means he should gain a victory. The prophet replied, by the young men, servants to the princes of Israel.

Benhadad and his thirty-two kings were at this time drinking in their tents secure of victory; but they soon found themselves not so safe as they imagined. In consequence of the assurance Ahab had received of success from the prophet he, about noon, dispatched the 232 young men to attack the guard of the Syrians, who being immediately followed by the rest of his army, they fell on the enemy with such courage and resolution, that they were thrown into the utmost disorder. Prodigious numbers were killed on the spot, and the rest fled with the greatest precipitation, Benhadad himself very narrowly escaping with his life. The spoil taken from the enemy in gold, silver, equipage, &c. was very considerable; with the whole of which Ahab and his little army returned in triumph to Samaria.

A few days after Ahab had obtained this victory he received a second visit from the prophet, who gave him a particular charge to be on his guard, and to keep his army in proper order, for that, in the beginning of the next year, the Syrians would again invade his country, and that with an army no less considerable than that he had so lately conquered.

The prediction of the prophet was strictly verified. Some of Benhadad's generals persuaded him that the reason of their ill success arose from their having fought on the hills, but that if they attacked the Israelites in a level part of the country, there would be no doubt of their attempts being crowned with success. *Their gods, (said they, speaking of the Israelites) are gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we: but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they.*

Benhadad readily took the advice of his generals, and having raised an army equal in force to that of the preceding year, marched into the country of the Israelites, and encamped near Aphek ||, a city belonging to the tribe of Asher.

Ahab, having paid a strict attention to the advice

|| Aphek was situated at Libanus, on the banks of the river Adonis, between Heliopolis and Biblos; and, in all probability, is the same that Paul Lucas (in his voyage to the Levant) mentions as swallowed up in a lake about nine miles in circumference, wherein there are several houses all entire to be seen under water. The antients tell us, that the

soil about this place was very bituminous, which seems to confirm the opinion of those who think, that subterraneous fires consumed the solid substance of the earth whereon the city stood, so that it sunk at once, and a lake was soon formed in its place.

vice of the prophet, was prepared to receive the enemy, and though with a force far inferior to the Syrians, marched out to give them battle. The two armies lay opposite to each other for six successive days, in the course of which a prophet came to Ahab with this message: *Thus saith the Lord, Because the Syrians have said, The Lord is God of the hills, but he is not God of the vallies; therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the Lord.*

Encouraged by this Divine promise, on the seventh day Ahab, having properly disposed of his small army, attacked the Syrians with the most distinguished vigour; and so successful was he that no less than 100,000 were killed on the spot, and the rest, in order to save themselves, fled to the city of Aphek. But they were far from finding any security here: the vengeance of God pursued them, for on their entering the city the walls suddenly fell to the ground, by which no less than 27,000 were crushed to death.

Terrified at this dreadful judgment Benhadad, with some of his principal officers and friends, retired for security to a private building within the city. They debated, for some time, in what manner they should act, till at length Benhadad's friends advised him to dispatch ambassadors to Ahab in the humblest manner, and make their submission on such terms as he should think proper to stipulate. *Behold, said they, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings: let us, we pray thee, put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes* upon our heads, and go out to the king of Israel: peradventure he will save thy life.*

This advice being approved of, ambassadors were immediately dispatched to king Ahab, requesting him to make such propositions as he should think proper, and whatever they were, they should be strictly observed. Ahab was very moderate in his demands: the only conditions he insisted on were, that the Syrians should restore all the country, which they had taken from Baasha, king of Israel, and grant him some privileges in their capital city Damascus, as a token of their homage and subjection.

Such mild terms of accommodation could not but be acceptable to Benhadad; the consequence of which was that a league of friendship immediately took place between the contending monarchs. But this league was highly offensive to God, who was pleased to send a prophet to Ahab with a message to this effect: "That had he destroyed Benhadad (as God had put it in his power) his dominions should have been

annexed to the kingdom of Israel; but that, since he had acted otherwise, his life should pay for the life of Benhadad †: for that he should be slain in battle with the Syrians, who, instead of being held in subjection by the Israelites, should, in a few years, become their masters, take their towns from them, and make ravages in different parts of their country."

Ahab, instead of humbling himself at the denunciation of this heavy sentence, or expressing any sorrow for his fault, retired to his palace at Samaria sullen and displeased, and, in a short time, added to the offence he had committed by a transaction of the most unjustifiable nature.

Adjoining to the gardens belonging to the royal palace of Jezreel, one Naboth, a citizen of the place, had a vineyard, which Ahab was desirous of obtaining, in order to enlarge his own grounds. To effect his wishes, he offered Naboth an equivalent either in land or money; but Naboth, on account of its being his paternal inheritance, refused to part with it on any terms whatever. This gave Ahab the greatest uneasiness, insomuch that he took to his bed from mere discontent, and was so sullen and uneasy, that he would not receive any kind of refreshment.

When Jezebel found her husband to continue in this melancholy situation, she was anxious to know the cause of his disorder: *Why, said she, is thy spirit so bad, that thou eatest no bread?* To which he replied, *Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money, or else, if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard.*

As soon as Jezebel was acquainted with the cause of her husband's complaint, she first upbraided him with his pusillanimity, or not knowing how to exert the authority of a king, and then, to cheer his spirits, bade him banish all melancholy, for that she had thought of an expedient by which means he might be put in possession of Naboth's vineyard. But this was a diabolical scheme indeed, and such an one as could only have been concerted by the most abandoned and wicked of her sex. She wrote letters from Samaria, in Ahab's name, and sealed with his signet, to the principal men in Jezreel, ordering them to proclaim a fast, to bring Naboth before the judges, and to suborn two false witnesses, who should depose against him, that he had blasphemed God and the king ‡, that he might be carried out of the city and stoned to death.

Notwithstanding the baseness of this plot, yet such

* This was the dress of humble supplicants in those times. The sackcloth on their loins was a token of great sorrow for what they had done; and the ropes on their heads an indication that they would submit to whatever punishment Ahab should think proper to lay on them.

† Ahab's great offence consisted in suffering so horrid a blasphemer as Benhadad to go unpunished, which was contrary to an express law, Lev. xxiv. 16; and this law extended not to those only that were born in the land, but to strangers likewise that were among them, and in their power, as Benhadad certainly was. God had delivered him into Ahab's hand for his blasphemy, as he had promised, and therefore

this act of Providence, compared with the law, plainly intimated, that he was appointed by God for destruction; but Ahab was so far from punishing him as he deserved, that he treated him like a friend and a brother, dismissed him upon easy terms, and took his bare word for the performance of the covenant, without the least regard to the reparation of God's honour.

‡ By the law of Moses it was death to blaspheme God, Lev. xxiv. 16. and by custom it was death to revile the king. Exod. xxii. 28. Now, in order to make safe work, the evidences (as they were instructed) accus'd Naboth of both these crimes, that the people might be the better satisfied to see him

such influence had the king over the elders of Jezreel (they supposing the order to come from him) that every thing was executed according to the plan laid down by the wicked Jezebel, and the innocent Naboth fell a sacrifice to the covetous disposition of the king, and the diabolical machinations of a base and perfidious woman.

As soon as Jezebel received intelligence of the death of Naboth, she immediately repaired to the king, informed him of the circumstance, and told him to go to Jezreel, and, without any ceremony, take possession of the vineyard. Ahab followed his wife's directions; but, on his return to Samaria, he was met by the prophet Elijah, who, by God's directions, first upbraided him for having slain the innocent, and seized on his inheritance, and then denounced a judgment on him to this effect: "That where the blood of Naboth had been licked by the dogs, they should likewise lick the blood of Ahab and Jezebel; and that the crime of taking away the life of an innocent man by perjury should be punished by the extirpation of their whole race."

Ahab was so affected at the denunciation of this judgment, that he became deeply penitent for his sins: he cloathed himself in sack-cloth, fasted, went barefoot, and gave every other testimony of the most unfeigned sorrow and humiliation. Hereupon the prophet was commissioned to acquaint him, that, in consideration of his contrition, the judgment which had been threatened should be postponed during his life, but that it should certainly take place in that of his son; the truth of which prediction will hereafter appear.

We have already observed that Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, had imprudently married his son and heir to the daughter of Ahab; which alliance produced an intimacy between the two kings. In consequence of this, Jehoshaphat went one day to Samaria, to pay a visit to Ahab, who entertained him and his attendants in the most splendid manner. Ahab, taking advantage of this opportunity, invited Jehoshaphat to accompany and assist him in the siege of Ramoth-Gilead, a town belonging to the tribe of Gad, which the king of Syria unjustly detained from him. Jehoshaphat agreed to assist Ahab in this expedition, but being unwilling to set about it without consulting the Divine approbation, he desired Ahab to enquire of the prophets concerning the event. In compliance with Jehoshaphat's request, Ahab assembled together his own prophets, the number of whom amounted to about four hundred, and putting the question to them, they answered, *Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king.*

Jehoshaphat was far from being satisfied with what these prophets predicted: he was conscious in himself that they were not men favoured of God, and therefore asked Ahab, whether he had no other prophets to whom he could apply on this occasion. Ahab told him there was one other, named Micaiah, who was the son of Imnah, but that he detested the man for having pre-

dicted only unhappy events, and for that reason he had ordered him to be kept in confinement. Jehoshaphat insisted on seeing this person, upon which a messenger was dispatched to bring him from the prison. In their way the messenger told Micaiah that the prophets had declared the event of the war would prove favourable to Ahab, and endeavoured to prevail on him to give a like report: *Let thy word, I pray thee* (said he) *be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good.* To which Micaiah replied, *As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak.*

When Micaiah came in the presence of the two kings, Ahab put the question to him, enjoining him neither to extenuate or aggravate the truth. Micaiah told him, that he had seen the people of Israel, like sheep without a shepherd, dispersed and pursued by the Syrians; and that by this representation the Lord had intimated that only the king should fall in the engagement. Ahab, having heard this prophecy, turned to Jehoshaphat, and asked him whether he was not now convinced that he had not wrongfully accused the man; upon which Micaiah, addressing himself to Ahab, spoke in words to this effect: "I have no enmity towards you: the prediction is the effect of an inspiration from the Almighty, by whose express command I have faithfully delivered it to you: but, by the flattering impositions of the false prophets, you are persuaded to engage in a war which will prove your destruction."

As soon as Micaiah had finished his prediction, one of Ahab's false prophets (after dissuading the king from paying any attention to what he said) ran up to him and smote him on the cheek; upon which Micaiah told him, that he would be shortly called to a severe account for his conduct, and that he would be driven to the necessity of flying to hiding places for the security of his person. The infatuated king, listening to what his false prophets had told him, and enraged at the prediction of Micaiah, ordered him to be taken back to prison, and there kept till he should return from the war. *Take Micaiah,* said he, *and carry him back unto Anan the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son; and say, Thus saith the king, put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction, until I come in peace.*

The next day the confederate kings led their forces towards Ramoth-Gilead. But when they came within sight of the enemy, Ahab's courage began to cool, and, thinking to evade the force of Micaiah's prophecy he threw off the badge of royalty, and disguised himself, but at the same time advised Jehoshaphat to keep on his royal robes. Benhadad, the king of the Syrians, had given particular orders to his generals to single out Ahab, (whom he considered as the chief author of the war) and, if possible, either to kill him, or take him prisoner. At first the Syrians mistook Jehoshaphat for the king of Israel, and therefore made after him; but at length, perceiving their mistake, and that he

was

him stoned. There is this difference however to be observed between these two crimes, that, if a man had only blasphemed God, he was to be tried by the great court at Jerusalem, (as the Hebrew Doctors tell us) and his goods came to his heirs; whereas, when a man was executed for treason

against the king, his estate went to the exchequer, and was forfeited to the king, against whom the offence was committed: and for this reason it was, that they accused Naboth of this crime likewise, that his estate might be confiscated, and Ahab, by that means, get possession of his vineyard.

was not the person they wanted, they desisted from their pursuit, and directed their course another way in search of Ahab.

By some means or other, notwithstanding the disguise Ahab had put on, they found out his situation; and one of Benhadad's domestics discharging an arrow at him, it went through a part of Ahab's armour, and penetrated his body. Apprehending that this unfortunate circumstance might depress the spirits of his troops, the wounded monarch ordered his charioteer to remove him a small distance from the army, where having remained till near sun-set, the blood flowing from his wound all the time, he gave up the ghost. In the mean time the two armies continued harrassing each other the whole day, but Ahab was the only person slain, by which was strictly fulfilled the prophecy of Micaiah. On the approach of night the Syrians retired to their tents; and when an herald had proclaimed the death of Ahab, the two armies separated, and each repaired to their respective homes.

The body of Ahab was carried to Samaria, and there interred; and his son Ahaziah succeeded him in the government. The chariot in which Ahab was slain, and conveyed to Samaria, was so stained with the blood that issued from his wound, that they were obliged to wash it at a neighbouring fountain; in doing of which the dogs came and licked it, whereby was fulfilled one part of the prediction of the prophet Elijah, which he denounced against Ahab and his wife for the murder of Naboth, the citizen of Jezreel.

After the return of Ahab's army to Samaria, Jehoshaphat went to Jerusalem, but was met on the way by the prophet Jehu, who severely reproved him for having formed a junction with the late idolatrous and wicked Ahab. This rebuke greatly afflicted Jehoshaphat, who no sooner arrived at Jerusalem, than he endeavoured to atone for the fault he had committed by acts of piety and justice. He first offered sacrifices to God, beseeching him to pardon his offences; having done which he ordered the priests and Levites to instruct the people throughout his dominions, in the laws of Moses, and to make them

thoroughly acquainted with the established religion of their ancestors. He appointed magistrates of the cities and large towns, whom he ordered to distribute justice to all ranks of people without favour or partiality. He selected from the priests and Levites, a certain number of judges, whom he directed that when matters of consequence were brought before them from the adjacent cities, they should not determine but on the coolest deliberation; since a deficiency of justice in the city, where the temple of God, and the palace of the king, were erected, would be highly dishonourable.

The conduct of Jehoshaphat, and the measures he took to preserve justice, as well as the true religion, among his people, was highly acceptable to God; of which he was soon sensible, by a circumstance that happened in his favour of the most singular and miraculous nature.

The Moabites and Ammonites, assisted by a prodigious number of auxiliaries, whom they hired on the occasion, resolved to invade the dominions of Jehoshaphat, which having done, they marched as far as the city of Engedi, (about thirty-eight miles from Jerusalem) where they encamped, intending either to give Jehoshaphat battle there if he came to oppose them, or if not, to decamp and lay siege to Jerusalem.

As soon as Jehoshaphat understood the intentions of his enemies, and where they were situated, he was greatly alarmed, and immediately gave orders for a fast to be kept throughout his dominions. Having done this he convened a general assembly of the people, with whom he repaired to the temple, where, in the most fervent manner, he addressed himself in prayer to God for protection; in which he was not only joined by the whole assembly, but likewise all the women and children who had gathered themselves together on the occasion.

While Jehoshaphat and the people were thus fervently praying to God to protect them from the power of their enemies, the Almighty was pleased to send to them the prophet Jahaziel with this message: "Hearken ye (said he) all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat: Thus saith the Lord
" unto

§ The prayer Jehoshaphat made to God on this occasion is deservedly accounted one of the most excellent we meet with in sacred history. He begins it with an acknowledgment of God's supreme and irresistible power, which extends itself every where, over all creatures in heaven and earth, which are every one subject to his authority—*O Lord God of our fathers, art thou not God in heaven? And rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? And in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?* He then remembers the peculiar relation, which the people of Israel have to him; the promise he made to Abraham, as a reward for his fidelity; and the deed of gift which he conveyed to him, and his posterity; *Art thou not our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of the land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham, thy friend?* He then reminds him of the long possession they had of the country, and of the temple, which Solomon had built for his worship, to whom, at the consecration, (and therefore he refers to Solomon's words at the consecration, 1 Kings viii.) he promised a gracious regard to all the prayers that should be offered there. *And they dwell therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying, If, when evil cometh upon him, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help.* In

the next place he represents the foul ingratitude of their enemies in invading a country, to which they had no manner of title, even though the Israelites did them not the least harm when they came to take possession of it, but took the pains to march a long way about to get to it, rather than give any molestation; and, in aggravation of their wickedness in this respect, he suggests, that by this invasion they made an attempt, not only upon the rights of the Israelites, but of God himself, who was the great Lord and Proprietor, from whom they held the land: *And now behold the children of Ammon, and Moab, and Mount Seir, whom thou wouldst not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not; behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou gavest us to inherit.* He then appeals to the justice of God, the righteous judge, who helps those that suffer wrong, especially when they have no other helper: for this is the last argument he makes use of to conciliate the Divine assistance, even the weak condition wherein he and his people were, which made them the objects of Divine pity, especially since they placed their hope and confidence in him alone, *O Lord, our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company, that cometh against us, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee.* 2 Chron. xx. 6, &c.

“ unto you, Be not afraid, nor dismayed, by
 “ reason of this great multitude; for the battle
 “ is not yours, but God’s. To-morrow go ye
 “ down against them: behold, they come up by
 “ the cliff of Zig, and ye shall find them at the
 “ end of the brook, before the wilderness of
 “ Jeruel. Ye shall not need to fight in this
 “ battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the
 “ salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and
 “ Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to-
 “ morrow go out against them: for the Lord
 “ will be with you.”

Not only Jehoshaphat, but the whole multitude, were so elated at this intelligence, that they immediately fell on their knees, and worshipped the Lord; and the Levites accompanied them by singing praises to God in the most lofty strain.

Early the next morning Jehoshaphat marched his army into the wilderness of Tekoah, where, making a halt, he addressed the people in a very short, but pathetic speech, in which he pressed them to the service of the Lord, assuring them that if they would believe him and his prophets, they should certainly prosper. *Hear me, (said he) O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established: believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.* Having said this, he appointed a certain number of singers, who were to march before the army, singing, as they moved along, these words: *Praise the Lord for his mercy endureth for ever.*

In this manner did the army of Jehoshaphat advance to meet the enemy; but before they came up with them it pleased God so to confound and infatuate them, that they fell upon each other through mistake: the Ammonites and Moabites, taking the people of Mount Seir for their enemies, fell on them, and put them to death; after which, not knowing each other, an universal confusion took place, and each fell by the hands of his antagonist.

When Jehoshaphat and his army came up to the spot they found not a single person of the enemy alive; and the spoil was so great that it was more than they could carry away. They employed themselves three days in gathering the riches left by their enemies, and on the fourth they repaired to a Valley, where they gave solemn thanks to God for their singular deliverance. This place was afterwards called the Valley of Berachach, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies, *the Valley of Blessing*. Having gathered up all the spoils they could conveniently carry away, Jehoshaphat, with his army, marched in triumph to Jerusalem, and were received by the people with the utmost demonstrations of joy. This event being soon circulated, it struck such a terror into all the neighbouring nations, that no farther attempt was made, during the reign of Jehoshaphat, to disturb the public tranquillity of the kingdom of Judah.

A short time after this Jehoshaphat imprudently joined himself with Ahaziah, king of Israel, in fitting out a large fleet at the port of Ezion-Geber, in order to go Tarshish to fetch gold. But this conjunction not being pleasing to God, on account of the wickedness of Ahaziah, their project failed of success, for, before they could

get out to sea, a storm arose, which raged with such violence, that the whole fleet was dashed to pieces upon a ridge of rocks near the mouth of the harbour.

After Jehoshaphat had reflected on this singular and melancholy event, he was fully convinced that it was a just judgment inflicted on him by Providence for having formed a connexion with so impious a prince as king Ahaziah. He therefore soon after (and not long before his death) fitted out a fleet, solely on his own account, from the port of Eloh, which making a good voyage, returned in proper time, and brought him not only gold, but great quantities of very valuable articles, the natural produce of the country.

Jehoshaphat, during the remainder of his reign, employed his time in acts of piety, and used all the means in his power to work a thorough reformation among his people; though he could not, during his life, totally extirpate the high-places. He reigned twenty-five years over Judah, died at the age of sixty, and was buried in the City of David.

On the death of Jehoshaphat the throne of Judah was filled by his eldest son Jehoram, a prince of a very cruel and wicked disposition. His father Jehoshaphat had six other sons; but, to give no umbrage for suspicion, he had, in his life-time, removed them from the court, made them governors of fenced cities, and given them separate fortunes of their own. But, notwithstanding all this precaution, as soon as Jehoram was settled on the throne, he not only murdered all his brothers, but likewise several chief men of Israel, who (as he suspected) either adhered to their party, or were likely to revenge their deaths.

In consequence of these proceedings, and other acts of impiety daily committed by Jehoram, the prophet Elijah sent him a very severe letter, in which he first upbraided him for departing from the religion of his ancestors, and then threatened him with heavy judgments as a punishment for his enormities. “ Because, said he, thou hast
 “ not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Aza, king of Judah,
 “ but hast walked in the way of the king of Israel, and has made Judah and the inhabitants
 “ of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the
 “ whoredoms of the house of Ahab, and also
 “ hast slain thy brethren of thy father’s house,
 “ which were better than thyself: Behold, with
 “ a great plague will the Lord smite thy people,
 “ and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy
 “ goods: And thou shalt have great sickness by
 “ disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall
 “ out, by reason of the sickness day by day.”

It was not long before the dreadful judgment pronounced by the prophet Elijah began to take place. The Edomites, who had been subject to the house of David, now rebelled; and, having expelled Jehoram’s deputy, set up a king of their own, and were never after subject to the government of Judah. The people of Libnah likewise, a city of his dominions, shook off their allegiance, and refused to acknowledge him any longer for their sovereign.

These were but the beginning of Jehoram’s troubles; for a short time after the Philistines and

and Arabians invaded his dominions, ravaged the country, plundered his palace, carried away his wives and children, and returned home in triumph.

To compleat his punishment, and fulfil the prediction of the prophet Elijah, God was pleased to afflict him with a most violent dysentery under which he languished in great torments for the space of two years, at the expiration of which he died unlamented, in the fortieth year of his age, and eighth of his reign. He was buried in the City of David, but in such contempt did his subjects hold him, that they refused him royal interment, and instead of laying his body in the sepulchre of his predecessors, it was deposited in a private place appointed for the purpose.—It is worthy of observation, that there was hardly any calamity that could be thought of which did not befall this wicked prince. His kingdom was destroyed and depopulated by the fiercest nations; his treasures ransacked; his wives and children carried into captivity; himself afflicted with a sore disease for two years; and, when he was dead, denied the honour of a royal interment. All which calamities were threatened in the writing sent him in the name of Elijah, that he might not think they came by chance, but by the special direction of God, as a punishment for his impiety and wickedness.

We must now take notice of the occurrences that happened during the reign of king Ahaziah, who, as we have before observed, succeeded his father Ahab on the throne of Israel.

This prince was so naturally attached to every degree of vice as even to outdo his father. His reign, however, was very short (being in the whole not above the space of two years) but it was inglorious and full of trouble.

Soon after his accession to the throne, the Moabites, who had always been obedient to the kings of Israel from the first separation of the two kingdoms, now took the opportunity of revolting, nor was it in his power to reduce them to subjection.

In the beginning of the second year of his reign he received a violent hurt by a fall from the terrace of his house, insomuch that, in a short time, he was reduced to a very bad state of health. In this extremity, placing his dependance on the idols which he worshipped, he sent to Baalzebub †, the god of Ekron*, to know if he should recover: but, by God's appointment, the prophet Elijah was sent to meet the messengers, and to turn them back with this answer to Ahaziah: *Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to enquire of Baalzebub, the god of Ekron? Now therefore thus saith*

the Lord, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. Having said this Elijah departed, first ordering the messengers to hasten home with the intelligence he had given them to their master.

The quick return of the messengers greatly surprized Ahaziah, who asked them the reason of it. They told him they had met with a man on the way, who bade them return, and report to him, in the name of the God of the Israelites, that he should not survive his disorder. The king then demanded a description of the person who had sent such a message; upon which they told him that he was an hairy man, and that he wore a leathern girdle.

From this description Ahaziah imagined the person to be Elijah the prophet; and therefore dispatched an officer of his army, with fifty men under his command, to apprehend him, intending to put him to death for his presumption. The officer, meeting with Elijah on the top of a mountain, accosted him in these words: *Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down.* Elijah replied, *If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty.* No sooner had he said these words than fire immediately descended from heaven, and the officer, together with his fifty men, were instantly destroyed.

As soon as Ahaziah understood the fate of the officer and fifty men, whom he sent to apprehend Elijah, instead of being alarmed at it, he sent another officer, with fifty more, all of whom, for their presumption, shared the same fate. This, however, made no impression on the hardened king, who dispatched a third officer, with fifty others. This person acted very differently to the two former, for when he came to Elijah, instead of peremptorily demanding his person, he fell on his knees, and addressed him as follows: *O man of God, said he, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty t'y servants, be precious in thy sight. Behold, there came fire down from heaven, and burned up the two captains of the former fifties, with their fifties: therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight.*

At this instant the voice of the Lord came unto Elijah, ordering him to attend the officer and his company, and go with them to Ahaziah. The prophet obeyed the Divine command, and as soon as he came in the presence of the king, he, without any ceremony, addressed him as follows: *Forasmuch as thou hast sent messengers to enquire of Baalzebub, the god of Ekron, therefore thou shalt not come down off that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die †.*

It was not long before this prediction of the prophet

† The word Baal-zebub signifies the *god of flies*: but how this idol obtained that appellation it is not easy to determine.

* Ekron was a city of the Philistines, which fell by lot to the tribe of Judah, but was afterwards given to the tribe of Dan, though it does not appear that the Jews ever had a quiet possession of it.

† The circumstances attending the fate of Ahaziah, as denounced by the prophet Elijah, have been greatly objected to by such as have not considered the whole matter in its proper light. To remove these objections, and justify the conduct of the prophet, who was Divinely directed, we must first of all consider, that the wickedness of Ahaziah and his

people was exceeding great. He was not moved by the untimely death of his father but followed his pernicious example, still seducing the people, and provoking the God of Israel by his abominable idolatries. The author of the Book of Chronicles informs us, that his impiety was so provoking, that God had abandoned him, and would not prosper the naval expedition of Jehoshaphat because he joined the fleet of this vicious prince. The wickedness of Ahab, so great in itself, was highly aggravated by his making the people to sin. By his evil example and authority, he corrupted their worship, and justly drew upon himself the guilt of their transgressions. Ahaziah and his people could not but know what

prophet was verified. The king's illness increased every day, and he at length gave up the ghost, after reigning, or rather being on the throne of Israel, only two years. Having no son, he was succeeded by his Brother Jehoram, at which time Jehoram †, the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, was in the second year of his reign.

The denunciation pronounced by the prophet Elijah against the wicked king Ahaziah, was the last business he did of a public nature, by Divine commission, during his earthly peregrina-

tions, he being soon after translated into heaven. We have the greatest reason to imagine, that God had been pleased to give him some intimation of the time when this miraculous event should happen; for, previous to his departure, he visited the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel and Jericho, and took his leave of them with such solemnity, that they suspected it was the last visit he intended to make them. He would willingly have left his servant Elisha at both these places, but he being apprized that his master's time was but short on earth, resolved to continue

what judgments this prophet had denounced against his family, on account of their idolatries. How great then must their guilt be, in persisting in them, notwithstanding these warnings? The king himself was certainly an incorrigible sinner; for when he was dangerously ill from his fall from the terrace, he did not repent, but sent to enquire of Baalzebub, the idol of the Ekronites. This fresh instance of his impiety so offended the true God, that he decreed he should not recover, and sent Elijah to foretel his death to the messengers. But even this message, instead of touching him with remorse, excited in him the wicked resolution of murdering the prophet. No one can doubt but that he designed to take away his life, who reflects on the implacable hatred his family bore this holy man for reproving their wickedness; the resolution his mother Jezebel had formed of cutting him off, and the obstinacy with which the king himself persisted in his sins. The manner of sending for him confirms this to have been his design. Why did he not send the same messengers as he did to Ekron? How came he to send a company of soldiers, if he had not the design of taking away his life? The captains commanded him to come down, but in a haughty manner, because they thought he must surrender himself, and had he refused to go with them, would undoubtedly have compelled him by force.

If the king himself was so obdurately wicked, though his life was endangered by the fall, we may justly presume that those who were employed on this occasion were not much better; for they must have been either idolaters, or the worshippers of the true God. If they were idolaters, their sin must have received no small aggravation from their engaging in this attempt; and they could not but know that Elijah did not deserve death for predicting the consequences of their master's indisposition, as a prophet. If they worshipped the true God, it was a great crime in them to go against the prophet of that God in whom they believed, and attempt his life, contrary to the dictates of their own consciences. Yet, were they either, they could not be excusable, and supposing them to have been idolaters, we may conclude that they executed this commission with pleasure. And if those who went first upon this design were culpable, what daring sinners must those be who made the second attempt, though such signal vengeance had overtaken those who preceded them? That it was the will of God to destroy these men, may be inferred from the presence of the angel who guarded the prophet. This is still farther evident from the nature of the punishment inflicted upon them. Though Elijah had been ever so much enraged, he could not bring down the devouring flames against them. Nor, had he prayed for this interposition, would his prayers have been heard, if he had desired what was unfitting with the conduct of infinite wisdom. The prophet appealed to this event for the truth of his mission, *If I be a man of God* &c. which means no more nor less, than that they had stiled him a *man of God*, by way of derision; but to convince them of the reality of this title, he assured them, that God himself would vindicate his character by sending down fire from heaven. What he foretold happened to the cost of those who called down this punishment upon them, by persisting in their infidelity.

Should it be asked why these men were singled out to suffer Divine punishment, when the whole nation was plunged in the same idolatrous practices and immoralities? It is easy to reply, that these men suffered in the case before us, because there was not the same reason why others should suffer, nor could the death of any others so well answer the ends of infinite wisdom. If this catastrophe was intended for the punishment of evil-doers, who so fit to be made examples, as those who were actually engaged in the wicked enterprize?

It was done for the security of a righteous man, whose life was in almost inextricable danger. It would have been impossible for him to escape, when beset by a whole company of soldiers; and if he surrendered, he lay at Ahaziah's mercy, who was his inveterate and implacable enemy. In this distress, God mercifully rescued him, by destroying those wicked agents, and by these means reserved him for future usefulness. This end was accomplished; for the third captain came with another view, and spoke in a very different manner, which plainly shewed he disapproved of the king's conduct, and that he was so impressed with fear at the destruction of the first and second companies, as to expect, should he follow their example, the like consequences. This punishment was intended to confirm Elijah's mission, and vindicate the honour of the *only God*. The fire coming from heaven upon Elijah's denouncing it, manifestly proved that Elijah was inspired by the creator of all the earth. And as it recalled to their minds the contest he lately had with the priests of Baal, wherein the descent of fire had been used as a test of the supreme power of the God of gods, this occurrence could not but operate upon their minds with double weight, and convince them of the wickedness of their enterprize; and since they were convinced by the former manifestations of the Divine power, the destruction of these men by a first and second descent of fire from heaven, was sufficient to rouse them out of this lethargy. As these men were the king's servants, their punishment might more sensibly convince him of his wickedness in seducing the people, and the people of their sin in following his example. Had as great a number of idolaters been destroyed in another place, it could not have had so good an effect; but their being struck dead in their attempt upon the prophet's life was proper to convince both the king and his subjects that he was really commissioned by God, and that the punishments he had denounced against their idolatries would certainly be inflicted. These few therefore, were not only taken away to preserve the prophet, but also to reclaim the people, and to prevent the ruin of the whole nation. When the general depravity of the kingdom is duly weighed, the number of those who perished will appear very small. If it should be asked why this severity was twice inflicted; the reply is easy; because the prince was so wicked, and his servants so daring as to make a second attempt. Hardened as they were, when the same punishment was inflicted a second time, they began to relent, as appears from the address of the third captain, who speaks not in the imperious language of the two first, but in the stile of a suppliant, who was convinced that Elijah was really a prophet of the true God.

If we consider this judgment as an act of God, there is nothing in it but what is agreeable to his perfections. That it was an instance of his power will not be contended, because it was what no man nor any superior being could inflict without his permission. His *holiness* and justice are conspicuously seen, because this catastrophe was intended as a punishment against enormous crimes, and the persons who suffered were engaged in a wicked attempt upon the life of his prophet. It could not be inconsistent with his *goodness* and *clemency*, because the death of these few was designed for the reformation of all the nation. His *wisdom* appears herein, inasmuch as by these means the prophet's life was preserved; and it was well adapted to the state of the kingdom, which, at this time called for some striking and alarming dispensation.

† To prevent confusion, the reader is desired to observe, that in the course of this part of the history there is mention made of two Jehorams, who reigned much about the same time; one, the second son of Anab, who succeeded his brother Ahaziah, and was king of Israel; and the other, who was son and heir to Jehoshaphat, and reigned in Judah.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



Richard Linn.

Sparrow.

(**The PROPHET ELIJAH** carried up to **HEAVEN**)
in a fiery Chariot, in the presence of his Disciple Elisha.

continue with him to the last, saying, *As the Lord liveth, and as thy servant liveth, I will not leave thee.*

When Elijah found the strong attachment his servant had to him, and his resolution of not leaving him, he made no farther attempt to oppose his wishes; upon which they both set forward towards the land of Gilead, the place of Elijah's nativity, and from whence he was to be translated. They were accompanied some way by fifty of the prophets, who at length stopped, but kept their eyes on them till they came to the river Jordan, which they were obliged to pass in their way to the land of Gilead. On their arrival here, Elijah took off his mantle, and spreading it over the river, the waters immediately separated, and they passed over on dry ground.

After proceeding a short way on the other side the Jordan (and still in sight of the fifty prophets,) Elijah said unto Elisha, *Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee.* To which Elisha replied, *I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.* Elijah answered, *Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.*

As they went on, and were thus talking together, there suddenly appeared, as it were, a bright chariot and horses coming towards them, which no sooner arrived, than it passed between them, and Elijah, at that instant, entering the chariot, a sudden gust of wind arose, directed by angels, which transported him into heaven.

Elisha, seeing his master ascend, cried out, *My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!* When he was no longer to be seen, he rent his cloathes, and expressed his sorrow by the deepest lamentations. His grief having a little subsided, he took up Elisha's mantle, which he had dropped in his ascent, and returning to the river Jordan, spread it over the waters, which immediately divided, and he passed on the other side in his way home.

The fifty prophets, who saw this second miracle, were convinced that Elisha was endued with the same spirit that had been possessed by his

master; and therefore, on meeting him, they acknowledged him his successor, and paid him equal respect. Imagining, however, that Elijah might be transported into some distant or desert part of the country, they desired permission to send out fifty men in search of him. Elisha told them it would be to no effect; but they seeming to wish for the indulgence required, he gave his assent. In consequence of this they dispatched the fifty men in search of Elisha, but finding their efforts in vain, after a trial of three successive days, they returned.

In the mean time Elisha prosecuted his journey towards Jericho, whither he had no sooner arrived, than the people, knowing the power with which he was invested, applied to him to remove two material disadvantages under which they had long laboured, namely, the brackishness of the water in the river, and the barrenness of the land. *Behold,* said they, *I pray thee, the situation of the city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water is nought, and the ground barren.* Elisha told them to bring him a new cruse with some salt in it, which being done, he went to the spring of the river, and, throwing in the salt, said, *Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from hence any more dearth, or barren land.*—So the waters were healed.

It was not long after Elisha had performed this singular and beneficial miracle, before another took place, by which it evidently appeared that he possessed, in the most ample manner, the same powers which had so singularly distinguished his late master. As he was on his way from Jericho to Bethel, he was met near the latter city by a great number of *little children*, who seeing him bald, mocked him, crying aloud, *Go up thou bald-head, go up thou bald-head.* After Elisha had passed them, he turned himself round, and, for their insolence, *curst them in the name of the Lord.* The consequence of this curse immediately took place, for two she-bears, rushing out of a neighbouring wood, suddenly fell on the children, and no less than forty-two were destroyed by those voracious animals §, whose fierceness,

§ In order to rescue the character of the prophet Elisha from the objections of infidels on account of the catastrophe of these *children*, it may not be improper to make some few observations on the subject. It evidently appears, from other passages in scripture, (as Gen. xliii. 8. and 1 Kings iii. 7, &c.) that the persons, termed *little children*, were grown to the age of maturity, and consequently were capable of being concerned in any riotous proceedings. Nay, their coming out of the city implied as much. They came out of Beth-el, the chief seat of idolatry; they had strongly imbibed the prejudices of their parents, and were old enough to distinguish between idolatry and the worship of the true God. They probably had heard, if they had not seen, that Elijah was taken up into heaven. The prophets of the true God, who resided in this place, were apprised of this event before it happened; and it could not but be supposed that an event of so astonishing a kind would become the chief topic of their conversation. The manner in which Elisha had repassed the river was undoubtedly spread abroad during his abode at Jericho; and his mission as a prophet was confirmed beyond dispute. They knew him to be a prophet of the true God, and derided him on account of his office; nay, they made a jest of the ascension of Elijah, a strong reprove of their idolatries; and in making a jest of that remarkable event, they shut their eyes against a miracle, which seems to have been wrought to reclaim them. The words, *Go up thou bald-head,*

go up thou bald-head, plainly refer to the ascension of Elijah; and if our translators had made use of the word *ascend*, instead of the words *go up*, this allusion would have appeared plainer and stronger. What still aggravates their guilt is, that they did not meet with the prophet by accident, but went out with a design to insult him. They likewise went in a body, which shewed that their motive was malice, and their going not casual. From hence it seems probable, that they went out not only to deride the prophet, but likewise to prevent his entering into the city. They feared he would be as zealous against their idolatries as Elijah had been; and by this insult they intended to free themselves from his remonstrances. Though the prophet could not but be displeased with the insult, yet no part of the narrative will countenance us in supposing that the curse he denounced against them was owing to the peevishness of his temper, or the ebullition of his anger. Though his rage had been ever so turbulent, it would not have supplied him with power to command these savage creatures to leave the woods at an instant, and to come to a place they did not frequent, as a public road must be supposed to be, in order to destroy these insolent youths. As his curse would have no effect had it proceeded from a peevish temper, we have no just cause from his cursing them to suspect, that he was agitated by any furious or malicious passion. The word *curse*, in scripture, has three different acceptations. It signifies to *injure* a curse; and in this

fierceness, (according to the opinion of Bishop Patrick) might have been increased by the loss of their whelps.

From Bethel Elisha went to Mount Carmel (where was probably a school of the prophets) and from thence he proceeded to Samaria, where he had soon various opportunities of displaying those prophetic powers with which he was invested, as will appear from the contents of the ensuing chapter.

We shall close the present chapter with some few observations on that remarkable event recorded in Sacred Writ (and which we have, agreeable thereto, already mentioned) relative to the translation of the prophet Elijah into heaven; and shall also point out the great affinity there was between him, John the Baptist, and Our Blessed Redeemer.

At the time the separation took place between Elijah and his servant Elisha, who was to succeed him, it is expressly said, *Behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder: and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.*

These words are certainly not to be taken in a literal sense; nor can we presume to enter into any precise explanation of them. We may suppose, that a bright and radiant cloud, which, as it ascended, might appear like a *chariot and horses*, raised Elijah from the earth, and leaving this globe behind, wafted him into the seats of the Blessed.

The assumption of Elijah (as well as that of Enoch) appears to have been not only to give the world a sensible proof of another, and a better country, even an heavenly one, but also to point out the interposition of God for the sake of his servants, as well as to signify the future ascension of his son, who was to be the Redeemer of lost mankind.

Elijah was, in various respects, a type both of Our Saviour and John the Baptist, as will appear from the following observations:

I. The New Testament sufficiently points out the affinity between Elijah and John the Baptist: nay, John is even called by the name of this prophet; and Christ himself so calls him in the encomium which he passed upon John, Matth. xi. 14. *And if ye will receive it, this is Elijah, which was for to come.* The prophet Malachi likewise mentions his name when he predicts that John was to appear before, and be the forerunner of, the Messiah. *Behold,* says he, *I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and illustrious day of the Lord.* And accordingly the angel told Zecharias, the father of

the Baptist, that his son should go before the Messiah, *in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, &c.* So that Elijah was a type of John the Baptist, as to the spirit and power of his ministry; and that in so remarkable a manner, that he is even called by his *name*. John was, as it were, another Elijah in spirit and ministry, though not in person; and thus we may account for his answer, when the priests and Levites sent to him; *Art thou Elijah, &c.?* and he said, *I am not.* "I am not that prophet personally, as you expect him to appear, though I am come in his *spirit* and in his *power*, mystically, but not identically the same."

There was some analogy between these two great personages also in their outward garb and deportment; the hairy raiment and leathern girdle; and also in their lonely and mortified lives in the wilderness; and their being persecuted by wicked princes, Elijah by Ahab and Jezebel, John by Herod and his wife Herodias.

But chiefly was Elijah a type of John in his sanctity, courage, and undaunted zeal for reformation; and in the spirit and purpose of his ministry, to awaken a sinful generation, to bring many, both of the rising and declining age, to that real piety towards God, which is the surest band of mutual duty to each other; to bring many, who were before totally ignorant and regardless of duty, to the knowledge of God, which is the only wisdom, and can only justify us in the sight of heaven. This Elijah eminently performed, when he caused the people to cry, *The Lord He is God, the Lord He is God:* This John also eminently performed, when numbers flocked to his baptism on the banks of the river Jordan, and he pointed out to the awakened penitents the *Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world.*

II. But Elijah was more especially a type of CHRIST, not only with respect to his ascension into heaven, but also in reference to the miracles he wrought; his invincible courage and zeal in the cause of God; and his commissioning successors to carry on the work of his ministry, after his departure from this world.

Elijah fasted forty days and forty nights in mount Horeb, the place where God appeared to Moses, and gave the law to his people Israel, and where also Moses fasted the same length of time; who, with Elijah, was the only person of whom we read this extraordinary miracle, and who therein figured our Saviour Christ, the great prophet

this sense God is said to have *curst* the ground after the fall. It signifies to *swish* a curse; and in this sense Shimei is said to have *curst* David. Lastly, it signifies to *pronounce* or *foretell* a curse; and in this sense Elisha is said to have *curst* the children. The historian expressly asserts that *he curst them in the name of the Lord.* To *speak in the name of the Lord*, is to deliver what he commands; to *prophecy in the name of the Lord*, is to foretell what he reveals; and to *curse in the name of the Lord*, is to declare a curse which he is pleased to inflict, and has authorized the prophets to denounce: so that in *curst*ing these supposed *children*, Elisha acted as a minister of the supreme ruler of the world; and, by his order foretold the punishment that was going to be inflicted upon these idolaters. His pronouncing this curse was not the cause of their catastrophe; but the certainty of their catastrophe,

and the command of God, were the causes of his pronouncing this curse. On the whole it appears, that the persons who mocked Elisha were not infants, but arrived to years of maturity: it appears that they did not insult him by chance, but by design; that they went out in crowds on purpose; that they mocked him because he was the prophet of the true God, from whom they had apostatized; and that he did not wish their untimely end from a principle of revenge, but only predicted it as a prophet. The punishment itself will appear just, if we consider the time, place, persons, and likewise how well it was adapted to convince the people of the heinousness of idolatry, and to recover them to that purity of worship which their law was peculiarly intended to preserve.

prophet and lawgiver of his people, who fasted forty days and forty nights in the wilderness: and hence we read, that in our Saviour's transfiguration on the mount, these two distinguished persons appeared with him in glory; Moses the great law-giver, and Elijah the zealous restorer of that law, which led to Christ, its end and perfection, and in whose honour their respective ministrations terminated.

Elijah was entertained by a widow, whose son notwithstanding died, and he raised him to life again: so Christ was entertained by Martha and Mary, whose brother Lazarus nevertheless died, and was also raised by him from the dead.

The spirit of Elijah rested upon Elisha. He cast his mantle upon him, which had such an influence, that he left all, and followed him. Through the like miraculous influence of the spirit Christ called his apostles, who left all, and followed him; and upon these, his appointed successors, he caused his spirit to rest, when like Elijah, he ascended up before them into heaven, and a cloud received him out of their sight.

We shall conclude our observations on the prophet Elijah with the character given of him by the Author of Ecclesiasticus, who, in chap. xlviii. 1, &c. has dedicated the following enco-

miuns to his memory: "Then stood up Elijah
" the prophet, as fire, and his word burnt like a
" lamp. He brought out a sore famine among
" them, and by his zeal he diminished their
" numbers. By the word of the Lord he shut
" up the heaven, and also three times brought
" down fire. O Elijah, how wast thou honoured
" by thy wondrous deeds? And who may
" glory like unto thee? Who didst raise a dead
" man from death, and his soul from the place
" of the dead, by the word of the most high;
" who broughtest kings to destruction, and ho-
" nourable men to their bed:—Who wast
" taken up in a whirlwind of fire, and in a cha-
" riot of fiery horses; who wast ordained for
" reproofs in their times, to pacify the wrath of
" the Lord's judgment, before it brake forth
" into fury; to turn the heart of the father to
" the son, and to restore the tribes of Jacob.
" In which last sentence our Author alludes to
" that passage in Malachi, chap. iv. 6. Behold
" I will send you Elijah the Prophet, before the
" coming of the great and dreadful day of the
" Lord; and he shall turn the hearts of the fa-
" thers to the children, and the hearts of the
" children to their fathers, lest I come and smite
" the earth with a curse."

CHAP. IV.

Jehoram, king of Israel, makes war against Mesha, king of Moab, in which he is assisted by Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, and the king of Edom. The confederate princes obtain a victory, on which the king of Moab, in a fit of despair, sacrifices his eldest son on the walls of his own city. The prophet Elisha performs several singular miracles. Benbadad, king of Syria, lays siege to Samaria, the capital of Jehoram's dominions. The siege is miraculously raised. Benbadad is put to death by his servant Hazael, who succeeds him in the government of Syria. The prophet Elisha anoints Jehu king of Israel. Jehu kills Jehoram king of Israel, and Ahaziah, king of Judah. Causes Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, to be put to death. Destroys the princes of the blood, the relations of Ahaziah, and the priests and temple of Baal. Jehu, towards the close of his reign, falls into idolatry, for which God suffers him to be punished by Hazael, king of Syria. He dies, and is succeeded by his son Jehoahaz, who follows his father's steps in idolatry; and, after an unhappy reign of seventeen years, pays the debt of nature. Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab, the late king of Israel, and widow of Jehoram king of Judah, conspires the destruction of the line of David. Jehoash, the son of Ahaziah king of Judah, is preserved by Jehoiada the high-priest, and proclaimed king of Jerusalem. Athaliah is put to death by order of Jehoiada, through whose means Jehoash is established on the throne of Judah.

JEHORAM succeeded his brother Ahaziah on the throne of Israel in the eighteenth year† of the reign of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah. Though he did not make any great reformation in his kingdom, yet he was far from

being so wicked either as his father or brother. He removed the idols of Baal, but the golden calves, erected by Jeroboam, he suffered still to remain.

A short time after Jehoram had ascended the throne

† We have observed, towards the close of the last chapter, that when Jehoram succeeded his brother Ahaziah on the throne of Israel, it was in the *second* year of the reign of Jehoram, king of Judah. It may, therefore, be naturally asked, how can it be here said (2 Kings iii. 1.) that he began to reign in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah? And in another place, (2 Kings viii. 16.) that Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, began to reign over Judah in the *fifth* year of Jehoram, king of Israel? To remove

this difficulty, it is only supposing (as is very natural) that Jehoshaphat declared his son Jehoram king, while himself was alive, and reigned in conjunction with him for the space of seven years. In this case, Jehoram, the son of Ahab, might begin his reign in the *second* year of Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, viz. in the *second* year that he reigned with his father, who was then alive; and Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, may be said to have begun his reign in the *fifth* of Jehoram, the son of Ahab, meaning the time, when, after his

throne of Israel, he formed the resolution of going to war with Masha, the then king of the Moabites, the cause of which was this: The Moabites, from the time that David conquered them, continued to pay an annual tribute of one thousand lambs, and the like number of rams (all unthorn) to the kings of Israel, till the death of Ahab; after which they refused to pay their tribute to his son Ahaziah, who having but a short and sickly reign, was not able to reduce them. Jehoram, being of an active and spirited disposition, determined to recover this right, and therefore demanded of Mesha the accustomed tribute, which being refused, he resolved to bring him into compliance by force of arms.

In consequence of this resolution, Jehoram first raised a very considerable army, and then sent to Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, to request his assistance in his intended undertaking. Jehoshaphat readily complied, sending for answer, *I will go up: I am as thou art, my people as thy people, and my horses as thy horses.*

The two kings of Israel and Judah, having joined their forces, marched towards the wilderness of Edom, where their strength was increased by the conjunction of the king of that part of the country. These three princes, in order to surprize the enemy, took a compass of seven days' march in the wilderness of Edom, when they found themselves so distressed for water, as well for their men as cattle, that they sunk into the utmost despondency. Jehoram was so distressed in his mind, that he impatiently exclaimed, *Alas! that the Lord hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab!* But Jehoshaphat, bearing the calamity with more coolness, asked, if there was not a prophet of the Lord near at hand, of whom they might make enquiry as well concerning their present distressed situation, as the fate of their intended expedition. Being informed, by a servant belonging to Jehoram, that, in a tent without the camp was the prophet Elisha, the three kings immediately repaired to him. As soon as Elisha saw Jehoram, he said to him, *What have I to do with thee? get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother.* To which Jehoram replied, *Nay; for the Lord hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab.* Elisha answered, *As the Lord of Hosts liveth, before whom I stand, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee.*

Having said this, Elisha ordered a musician to be called, and while he was playing on his in-

strument, and singing, the prophet, being inspired by the spirit of God, told the kings to cut ditches, which should be supplied with a sufficiency of water both for the people and their cattle. He moreover informed them, that God would enable them to overcome their enemies; that they should destroy all their plantations, choak up their rivers and fountains, and lay waste their country.

Early the next morning the confederate kings found the prediction of the prophet strictly verified, for the ditches they had caused to be dug were filled with water, so that a plentiful refreshment was obtained both for man and beast.

The king of Moab having heard of the intentions of the Israelites, and that they were on the way to invade his territories, marched out with a considerable army to give them battle, and came within sight of the Israelites soon after Elisha's prediction came to pass. When the Moabites perceived the water, which, from the reflection of the beams of the rising sun, appeared like blood, they concluded that the three kings had quarrelled, that their armies had engaged and slain each other, and that they had nothing more to do than take possession of the spoil. But they soon found themselves mistaken, for when they came up to the camp of the Israelites, in order to rifle it, they met with a reception little expected, the Israelites immediately falling on them with such courage and resolution, that they were obliged to give way, great numbers were slain on the spot, and the main body reduced to the necessity of endeavouring to save themselves by a precipitate flight.

The Israelites, taking advantage of this success, pursued the fugitives a considerable way into their own country, in the course of which they destroyed their fortified places, choaked up their springs, cut down their timber, and made ravage and devastation wherever they went. The king of the Moabites was obliged to seek refuge in his capital city Kirharaseth, whither the confederate army marched, and laid siege to the place. Mesha, finding himself not able to hold out long against so considerable a force, resolved on making one bold attempt. He selected seven hundred of his choicest troops, at the head of whom he made a desperate sally, intending to break through the quarters of the king of Edom. But this attempt proved fruitless, he being repulsed, and glad to save himself by a hasty retreat to his city. This circumstance so deeply affected him, that, in a mere fit of desperation, he sacrificed his eldest son † on the walls of the city

father's death, he began to reign alone. That the kings of Judah and Israel (as well as other oriental princes) were accustomed to appoint their successors, and, even during their life-time, to give them some share in the administration, is plain from several instances: and that Jehoshaphat found it expedient to settle his son in the kingdom with himself, seems to be intimated in 2 Chron. xxi. 3. where it is said, that *he gave the kingdom to Jehoram, because he was his first-born, and gave gifts to the rest of his sons*, who, being many, might perhaps be forming parties, and entering into cabals about the succession to the kingdom; and therefore, to put an end to all such contests, Jehoshaphat declared Jehoram king, while himself was on the throne, because he was his first-born.

† Not only the Holy Scriptures, but several heathen au-

thors assure us, that in cases of great extremity it was customary amongst various people to sacrifice to their gods whatever was most dear to them. Cæsar in his war with the Gauls tells us, that when they were afflicted with grievous diseases, or in time of war, or great danger, they either offered men for sacrifices, or vowed that they would offer them; without which they imagined their gods could never be appeased. In conformity with this horrid custom, and to appease, no doubt, as he thought, the anger of his idol Chemosh, the king of Moab made this costly sacrifice of his eldest son; a deed which, it is plain, was held in the greatest abhorrence by the Israelites, who, to prevent any more such sacrifices, departed from him, and returned into their own land.

city, which being seen by the Israelites, they were struck with such horror at so barbarous an action, that they immediately raised the siege, and retired to their own country.

After the defeat of the Moabites, and the raising of the siege of Kirharaseth, Elisha the prophet accompanied the king of Israel to Samaria, where he soon distinguished his superior powers by the performance of many great and singular miracles.

A poor woman, widow of one of the sons of the prophets, complained to him that her husband had left her poor, and that not having any thing to satisfy his creditors, they came to take away her two sons to make slaves of them. Elisha asked her what she had in the house; to which she replied, that she had only a pot of oil. Elisha bade her borrow what empty vessels she could of her neighbours, and take them home with her; then to shut herself up with her two sons, and from her little but multiplied store, to pour into the vessels till they were full. The woman did as she was commanded, and the oil continued to run from her own vessel till all those she had borrowed were filled. She then went to Elisha, to tell him what had passed, and to thank him for his interposition in her behalf; upon which the prophet told her to dispose of as much of the oil as would satisfy her creditors, and that with the remainder she might support herself and family.

This miracle was soon succeeded by another. Elisha used frequently to go to Shunam, in the way to which lived a very wealthy woman, who, taking particular notice of him, invited him to her house, and treated him with great hospitality. After having called several times, and refreshed himself at this woman's house, when on his journey to Shunam, she began to consider him in a light different to the generality of mankind, and expressed her sentiments on this head (as well as her desire to accommodate him the better) to her husband in these words: *Behold, (said she) I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, and let us set there for him a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick; and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither.*

The husband readily agreed to this proposition, and when the prophet next called she invited him to stay and repose himself for the night, as he would be the better enabled to prosecute his journey the next morning. Elisha accepted the woman's offer, and after refreshing himself, retired to the apartment which they had provided on the occasion.

Elisha, after having been repeatedly entertained by this woman, thought it necessary to

make some amends for the kind treatment he had received from his hospitable stranger. He accordingly one day sent to her his servant Gehazi to acquaint her that he was desirous of making a grateful acknowledgment for her repeated civilities, and that if she had any request to make either to the king, or the general of his army, he would readily deliver it, and doubted not but it would be attended with success. She told Gehazi that she lived in friendship with her neighbours, and that she had not any occasion to complain, or wish for any thing more than what she then enjoyed. Gehazi returned with this answer to his master, who asked him what he should do for her? Gehazi replied, *She hath no child, and her husband is old.* Elisha then ordered his servant to go and fetch her to him. She accordingly came, and as soon as Elisha saw her, he said, *About this season, according to the course of life, thou shalt have a son.* The woman at first distrusted the prophet, but soon after found that she had conceived, and, in the proper course of time was delivered of a son about the season predicted by the prophet.

When the child was grown up, so that he could run about, he was one day taken exceeding ill while he was with his father among the reapers in the field; and being carried home by a servant, he lay on his mother's lap till noon, and then expired. The afflicted mother, thus bereft of her only child, carried him up to the chamber, where Elijah was accustomed to lodge when on his way to Shunam, and laid him on his bed. Having done this she saddled an ass, and set out, with the greatest expedition for Mount Carmel, where she knew Elisha at that time resided. When she came within sight of the place, the prophet, observing her to come in great haste and disorder, and knowing her, sent his servant Gehazi to meet her, and to ask if all was well. After giving an answer to this question, she hastened to Elisha, whom she no sooner saw than she threw herself at his feet, and, with tears flowing from her cheeks, related the particulars of the loss of her son. Elisha bade Gehazi take his staff, hasten with all expedition to the Shunammite's house, and lay it on the face of the child. This, however, was far from satisfying the distressed mother, who said to Elisha, *As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.* Elisha, seeing how sensibly she was affected, complied with her request, and accompanied her home. In the mean time Gehazi (who had arrived at her house some time before Elisha) did as he was ordered by laying the staff on the face of the child. But this had not the least effect, upon which Gehazi left the house in order to return to his master. He had not, however, gone far before he met Elisha in company with the woman

§ The Jewish law looked upon children as the proper goods of their parents, who had power to sell them for seven years, as their creditors had to compel them to do it in order to pay their debts. From the Jews this custom was spread to the Athenians, and from them to the Romans. The Romans, indeed, had the most absolute controul over their children: by the decree of Romulus they could imprison, beat, kill, or sell their sons for slaves. Numa Pompilius first moderated this severity; and the emperor Dioclesian made a law that no free person should be sold on account of

debt. The antient Athenians had the like jurisdiction over their children; but Solon reformed this cruel custom, as, indeed, it seemed a little hard that the children of a poor man, who had no manner of inheritance left them, should be compelled into slavery, in order to pay their deceased father's debts; and yet, that this was the custom appears evident from the circumstance in question, the prophet, instead of reproving the creditors of the woman, putting her in a way how to pay the debts of her deceased husband,

woman to whom he related what had passed, that he had done as he had commanded him, but to no purpose, for *the child was not awaked*.

As soon as Elisha entered the house he went up to the chamber where the child lay, and making fast the door, first *prayed unto the Lord*, and then laid himself gently on the child, in which situation he continued for some time, till at length life returned, and the child, after sneezing seven times, opened its eyes. Elisha then called the mother, who immediately coming up, he said to her, *Take up thy son*. The woman, overjoyed at seeing her son alive again, prostrated herself before Elisha, then took up her child, and left the room; after which the prophet took his leave and departed.

From this woman's house Elisha went to Gilgal, where at that time there happened to be a great dearth. There being in this place a school of the prophets, Elijah ordered his servants to go into the fields, and gather herbs to make pottage, wherewith he intended to regale them. The servants did as they were directed, but one of them, through mistake, instead of wholesome herbs, gathered one of a very poisonous quality, which being shred in with the rest infected the whole, so that the young prophets no sooner tasted of the pottage; than they exclaimed, *O thou Man of God, there is death in the pot!* Elisha, on this, ordered them to bring him some meal, which being done, he threw it into the pot, by means whereof the poisonous quality was removed, the pottage became wholesome, and the young prophets regaled themselves with it without sustaining the least injury.

During the prophet's stay at Gilgal there came a man from Baal-shalisha, who brought him a present of twenty barley loaves of the first-fruits of the harvest. Elisha ordered the man to give them to the people that they might eat. The man, thinking so small a quantity was insufficient to satisfy the multitude, said, *What! should I set this before an hundred men?* Elisha replied, *Give the people that they may eat: for thus saith the Lord: They shall eat, and shall leave thereof*. The man did as he was ordered, upon which the people *did eat, and left thereof, according to the word of the Lord*.

These miracles gave such encouragement to the young prophets, that they addressed themselves to Elisha to have their habitation enlarged, it being too scanty for their reception. They therefore desired permission to go to Jordan to fetch timber for the purpose, and begged the prophet to accompany them on the business. Elisha complied with their request, and as they were felling trees by the side of the river, one of them accidentally dropped his ax, which falling in, prevented him from prosecuting his business. Not knowing what to do for the recovery of his ax, the man laid his complaint before Elisha, who asked him where it fell. The man shewing him the place, he cut a stick, and throwing it into the river, the ax immediately appeared on the surface of the water, which being taken up

was restored to the person who had dropped it.

But the miracle more particularly pointed out in the Sacred History, performed by Elisha is the following, which took place a short time after his return to Samaria.

Naaman, the king of Syria's general, a man famous for his exploits in war, and in high esteem with his master, had long been afflicted with a most violent leprosy, and had made application to the most eminent physicians of Syria, without obtaining the least relief. At length, his friends advised him to get letters of recommendation from the king his master to the king of Israel, beseeching him to use his utmost endeavours to procure a remedy for his faithful servant Naaman. The king of Syria complied with his general's request, upon which he set forward for Samaria, taking with him as a present to the king ten talents of silver, six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment.

As soon as the king of Israel had read the letter delivered to him by Naaman from his master the king of Syria, he rent his clothes, and said, "Am I a God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me." News of this being communicated to Elisha, he immediately dispatched a servant to the king with this message: "Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel."

In consequence of this message the king referred Naaman to the prophet Elisha, to whom he immediately repaired with all his attendants and stately equipage. On his arrival at Elisha's house, instead of being received in form, as he expected, the prophet sent a servant to him with this message: "Go, and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again unto thee, and thou shalt be clean."

The proud Syrian, thinking himself not well treated, and expecting, very likely, that the prophet, by some personal act, would have performed the cure, was highly offended, and resolved immediately to return home. But being advised by his principal attendants that since the prescription was so easy, and to make the experiment would not be attended with much trouble, he went to the river, and after having bathed seven times therein, found himself perfectly cured.

Naaman, rejoiced at his unexpected recovery, returned to Elisha, to whom he acknowledged that there was no other God than the God of Israel. He then importunately pressed him to receive a present, but this the prophet would by no means accept. In grateful acknowledgment of the benefit received, Naaman protested to Elisha that he would never after sacrifice to any but the God of Israel, and then begged that he would give him two mules burthens of earth || to carry home, wherewith he might build an altar.

|| He desired the earth of the land, because he thought it more holy and acceptable to God, and proper for his service; or because he would, by this token, declare his conjunction

with the people of Israel in the true worship, and constantly put himself in mind of his great obligation to that God, from whose land this earth was taken. He might have had indeed

altar. To deprecate any offence that might arise from waiting on the king his master when he went to worship in the temple of Rimmon, the idol of the Syrians, he, addressing himself to the prophet, said, "In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon: when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing." To which the prophet gave him no other answer than this, *Go in peace.*

The Syrian General being thus dismissed by Elisha, took his leave, and set out on his return home. Gehazi, Elisha's servant, thinking it unreasonable that so wealthy a person should go off without paying any thing for so great a benefit, resolved to get something for himself, though his master had refused the presents offered. He therefore (unknown to any one as he thought) followed Naaman, and soon overtook him. The general, knowing him to be the prophet's servant, no sooner saw him, than he alighted from his chariot, and demanded his business. Gehazi told him, that his master desired he would send him a talent of silver, and two changes of garments, for two sons of the prophets, who, since his departure, were come to visit him. Naaman, glad of this opportunity of making some acknowledgment to Elisha for the benefits he had received, pressed Gehazi, instead of one, to take two talents of silver with the garments. He likewise sent two of his own servants to carry them home; but before they came to the house Gehazi dismissed them, and then concealed the money and garments for his own use.

As soon as Gehazi came into the presence of his master, he asked him where he had been. To which he replied, *Thy servant went no whither.* Elisha then particularized all that had happened, and, as a punishment for Gehazi's baseness in endeavouring to impose on him, denounced this sentence: That the leprosy of which he had cured Naaman should adhere to him and his family for ever. This prophecy immediately took place, and Gehazi was changed from a clean man into a deplorable leper.

The prophet Elisha certainly did Benhadad, king of Syria, a very material piece of service in curing Naaman, his great favourite, and general of his army, of a confirmed leprosy. But these services, however they might have been confi-

dered at first, were soon forgot, and Benhadad gave fresh instances of his great enmity towards the Israelites. Having raised a very considerable army with a design of besieging Samaria, he opened the campaign with the stratagems of war; and, in hopes of surprizing Jehoram's troops, placed ambuscades in various parts. But Elisha, by his spirit of prophecy, knew all his proceedings, and gave the king of Israel such intelligence, that all Benhadad's stratagems proved ineffectual.

Benhadad, finding himself fail in every attempt by stratagem, at first suspected that his counsels were betrayed; but this suspicion was removed by one of his officers telling him that Elisha (who was then at Dothan, a small city belonging to the half tribe of Manasseh, and not far from Samaria) must certainly have been the cause of all his disappointments*. Benhadad, giving credit to the observation made by his officer, determined to seek revenge on Elisha, for which purpose he sent a detachment of his men to Dothan to seize him and who, that very same night, invested the city:

Elisha's servant rising early the next morning, saw the place surrounded by a large body of men; not knowing of any forces to oppose them, he was greatly alarmed, and, running hastily to his master, expressed his fear and concern in these words: *Alas, my master! how shall we do?* Elisha told him to fear not; after which he prayed, and said, *Lord, open his eyes that he may see*†. This request was granted: the man's eyes were immediately opened, and he beheld a multitude of horses and chariots of fire standing in array in order to protect them. Elisha still continued praying to God, to defend them against the enemy, the consequence of which was that when they attempted to lay close siege to the place, they were suddenly struck with such a dimness as to lose the power of sight. When Elisha found this, he persuaded them that they had missed their way, and had mistaken the place they were bound to; after which he caused them to be led into the very midst of Samaria, where, at the prophet's request, God was pleased to open their eyes, that they might behold the great danger in which they were involved.

When the king of Israel understood what a number of the enemy were in his city, and how much they lay at his mercy, he would willingly have put them all to the sword; but Elisha by all means dissuaded him from it, telling him that, as he would hardly be so cruel as to kill,

in

indeed enough of this earth without asking any one for it, but he desired the prophet to give it him, as believing, perhaps, that he, who put such virtue into the waters of Israel, could put as much in the earth thereof, and make it as useful and beneficial to him in another way. These thoughts indeed were groundless and extravagant, but yet were excusable in an heathen and novice, that was not as yet sufficiently instructed in the true religion.

* It is very reasonable to suppose that Naaman, on his return from Samaria, spread the fame of Elisha so much in the court of Syria, that some of the great men there might have the curiosity to make a farther enquiry concerning him; and being informed of his miraculous works, they might from thence conclude that he could tell the greatest secrets, as well as perform the wonders related of him, and that, therefore, in all probability, he was the person who gave the king of

Israel intelligence of all the schemes that had been contrived to ensnare him.

† It is probable this young man had been but a little time with his master; no longer than since Gehazi's dismissal; and therefore had not seen any proofs of his master's power in working miracles, or, if he had, the great and imminent danger he thought his master in might well be allowed to raise his fear, and shake his faith; and therefore some miracle was necessary for the removal of the one, and the confirmation of the other. It is allowed that angels, whether they are purely spiritual, or clothed with some material vehicle, cannot be seen by mortal eyes; and therefore as Elisha himself, without a peculiar vouchsafement of God, could not discern the heavenly host which at this time encamped about him, so he requested of God that, for the causes above mentioned, his servant might be indulged with that privilege.

in cold blood, even prisoners that were taken in war, much less should he touch those who were brought into his hands by the Providence of God. He therefore advised him to treat them with all manner of civility, and let them go: "Set bread and water before them (said he) that they may eat and drink, and go to their master." Jehoram did as the prophet directed, and the men, after refreshing themselves with the entertainment provided for them, returned to their own country."

As soon as these men got home they gave the king their master a minute account of all that had happened during their absence; on the reflection of which Benhadad resolved that, from thenceforward, he would never seek to injure the king of Israel in a treacherous manner; but, confiding in his own numbers and strength, would engage him in open war.

In consequence of this resolution Benhadad (forgetting the late kind behaviour of Jehoram to his subjects, and still retaining a mortal hatred against the Israelites) marched with a considerable army to Samaria, laid close siege to the place, and in a short time reduced the people to such distress, that an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and five pieces were given for three quarters of a pint of pulse. In this distress Jehoram was apprehensive that some person might inform the enemy to what a degree the famine had reduced them; for which reason he daily walked round the fortifications, had an eye upon the guards, and was very attentive that no person whatever should enter the city without first undergoing a proper examination.

As Jehoram was one day walking on the walls of the city on this business, a strange woman called to him, and requested his assistance. The king, supposing the woman wanted food, asked her how she could expect him to relieve her, since he had neither barns nor wine-presses? The woman told him, she did not solicit for food, but for justice, and earnestly requested him to determine a dispute between herself and another woman. The king asking her meaning, she told him that her neighbour and herself, having each a male infant, and both ready to perish for want of food, had agreed to kill their children in turn to prevent starving. That her child was killed and dressed on the preceding day, and the other woman partook of it; but now that she ought to partake of her child, the woman had departed from her promise, and concealed it †.

This melancholy tale so affected the king, that he rent his clothes, and, in a fit of rage, vowed to be revenged on Elisha, whom he took to be the cause of all the calamity. For this purpose he sent an officer to take off his head, whilst him-

self followed to see that his orders were properly executed.

Elisha, by the spirit of prophecy, had notice of this wicked design against his life; and therefore, having acquainted the people with it who were with him, he desired them to secure the doors, that the officer might not be admitted till the arrival of the king.

As soon as Jehoram came, the prophet earnestly exhorted him to have a little patience, and God would remove this affliction in due time. The king, in a fit of despair, told him he would wait no longer, without trying some expedient whereby to obtain relief, and that since he would not offer any prayer to his God in behalf of the people, he would go and worship his father's idols, who, peradventure, would deliver him from the great evils under which he then laboured. In answer to this the prophet assured him, that by the same hour, on the following day, provisions should be so cheap in Samaria, that the market price of a measure of fine flour should be only a shekel §, and the same sum for two measures of barley.

This prediction was credited by the king, and all those of his attendants who had seen different proofs of the prophet's veracity. But one of the king's favourite officers, who commanded a third of his army, affirmed it to be a thing impossible, unless God should rain corn from the clouds. The prophet made him a short answer to this effect: "that himself should see the plenty, but should not be permitted to taste of it;" which prediction accordingly came to pass.

It happened at this time that there were four leprous persons lived without the gates of the city, it not being customary, according to the ceremonial part of the law, to admit any such within the walls. The famine raged with such violence in the city that no provisions could be expected from that quarter; and to remain where they were was but to give themselves up to the most lamentable of deaths: they therefore unanimously resolved to expose themselves to the mercy of the enemy, who would either relieve their necessities, or put them to death, so that their miseries would, one way or other, be soon terminated.

In consequence of this resolution, before it was day-light the next morning, they proceeded towards the camp of the Syrians, whither they had no sooner arrived than, to their great surprise, they found it entirely deserted by the enemy. On the approach of the lepers, the Syrians imagined they heard the noise of chariots and horses, and therefore concluded that the king of Israel had called in to his assistance the Hittites and Egyptians, and were coming to surprise

† The manner in which this melancholy story is related in the scriptures is as follows: *And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king. And he said, If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of the barn-floor, or out of the wine-press? And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son that we may eat him to-day, and we will eat my son to-morrow. So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath*

bid her son. 2 Kings, vi. 26, &c. A melancholy story indeed! and a terrible display of that Divine vengeance which Moses had long before told the Israelites would befall them, if they rebelled against God. See Deut. xxviii. 53.

§ The shekel was much about the same as three shillings of our money; and though to have a measure of fine flour for such a sum at other times would not have been reckoned cheap, yet, according to the then situation of affairs, it was so to a very wonderful degree.

surprize them. This conjecture threw them into the greatest consternation, insomuch that every man began to shift for himself, and the whole army retired in confusion, leaving behind them their tents, cattle, treasure, and great abundance of all the necessaries of life.

The lepers, having gone throughout the camp, and found all safe, first regaled themselves in one of the tents, and then carried away a great quantity of gold, and other rich effects, all which they buried in a hole they had dug for the purpose. But while they were thus regaling and providing for themselves they reflected that their countrymen were under the dismal apprehension of starving in the town, or perishing by the enemy, and that it was but justice to inform them, as soon as possible, of the happy event that had taken place. *We do not well, said they to each other: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household.*

In consequence of this reflection, they immediately returned to the city, and informed the porter at the gate that the Syrians were fled, and left behind them all their tents, cattle, treasure, &c.

Intelligence of this being soon communicated to the king, he immediately summoned a council, to whom he gave it as his opinion, that it was only an artifice of the enemy to draw them out of the city, and that, placing themselves in ambush, they would suddenly fall on them, and obtain a compleat victory. The council were of the king's opinion, one of whom observed, that it would be proper to send two horsemen as far as the river Jordan, and if their suggestions were justly founded, and they should be made prisoners, the loss would not be very considerable; but, if they did not discover any part of the enemy, they might reasonably suppose that all was safe, and that they had retired to their own country.

The king readily agreed to this proposal, and two men, mounted on horses, were immediately dispatched on the business. In a short time they returned, with an account that not a single person of the enemy was to be seen; but that there was plenty of corn and arms, with abundance of other valuable articles which the Syrians had left behind them.

In consequence of this intelligence the people rushed out of the city in great numbers, pillaged the camp of the enemy, and brought in such a quantity of provisions, that, according to Elisha's prediction, one measure of flour, and two of barley, were sold each for a shekel. The nobleman, who had disputed the prophecy of Elisha was appointed by the king to guard the gate which led from the city to the camp, in order to prevent disorders, but the crowd pressed on

him with such vehemence that he was trampled to death; so that though he saw the great abundance of provisions brought to market; yet, as Elisha had predicted, he did not *eat thereof*. — Thus did the Lord work a double miracle for his people; at once delivering them from the Syrians, and giving them an unexpected supply for their necessities; fulfilling exactly the predictions of his prophet, and thus giving the highest authority to his mission.

After this a very severe and long famine took place in the land of Israel, of which Elisha being apprized, gave his hospitable hostess the Shunamite warning, advising her to go with her family into some other country, till the calamity ceased. *Arise, said he, and go thou and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst: for the Lord hath called for a famine, and it shall come upon the land seven years.* The woman took the prophet's advice, but on her return, at the expiration of the seven years, found her estate was seized, and in the possession of strangers. On her asking for her right, and to be re-possessed of her estate, the usurpers refused her request, upon which she went to the king, who happened at the time to be talking with Gehazi, the late servant of Elisha, and who was recounting to him the various miracles he had seen performed by his master. As soon as Gehazi beheld the woman and her son he told the king she was the person of whom he had been speaking, and the boy with her was her son, whom his master, after he was dead, had raised to life. The woman confirming what Gehazi had asserted, the king gave orders that her estate should not only be restored, but that the profits thereof should be paid her from the time she left it to the day of her return.

From the miraculous raising of the siege of Samaria Benhadad was deterred from making any farther attempts upon Israel: nor do we hear any thing more of him in the Sacred History till about seven years after, when Elisha went to Damascus, the capital of Syria, to execute the order of declaring Hazael king, which was originally given to his predecessor Elijah.

Benhadad was at this time exceeding ill, and hearing of the arrival of the prophet, whose great power and abilities he well knew, he sent Hazael, (who was then become one of his prime ministers) to wait upon him with a very handsome present, and to enquire of him whether or not he should recover from the sickness under which he then laboured. The prophet told him that the king might recover, but that *the Lord had shewed him he should surely die*. Elisha then looking stedfastly at Hazael, burst into a flood of tears; upon which the other asked, why he wept. The prophet replied, *Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their*
young

|| The scripture does not inform us of the nature of Benhadad's disorder; but it is very evident that it was not so desperate, but that he might have recovered, had he not had foul play for his life. According to the account of Josephus, it was no more than a fit of melancholy; for, "when he came to understand (as he tells us) that all the alarms of

" chariots and horsemen, that had given such an irreparable
" rout to him and his army were, in truth, only judicial im-
" pressions of fright and terror, without any foundation, he
" looked upon it as a declaration from heaven against him;
" and this anxiety of thought made him as sick in body as
" he was in mind."

young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child. Hazael asked how he could be the author of such distress? To which Elisha replied, *The Lord hath shewed me that thou shalt be king over Syria.*

At these words Hazael's ambition took wing: he immediately left the prophet, and returning to his master, instead of telling him what had passed, gave him great hopes of his recovery. This, however, he soon took care to prevent, for the next morning he put him to death, by stifling him with a thick cloth dipped in water. As Benhadad had not any son of his own, and Hazael was a man universally esteemed by the people, more especially the army, he was, without hesitation, declared his successor.

The next thing Elisha set about was, to have Jehu anointed king of Israel in conformity to the order given to his master Elijah, and to the Divine decree of punishing the family of Ahab for their manifold impieties.

The city of Ramoth-gilead had been a place of long dispute between the two crowns of Israel and Syria. Hazael, being an ambitious man, soon after his accession, invested the place, and made himself master of it; in consequence of which Jehoram, king of Israel, assisted by Ahaziah, king of Judah, marched with their forces against him. On the first onset Jehoram received a very dangerous wound, so that he was obliged to quit the army, and retire to Jezreel. His troops, however, continued to oppose the enemy under the command of Jehu, who, in the king's absence, acted as captain-general, and, in a short time, routed the enemy, and made himself master of the place.

The prophet Elisha, thinking this a very proper opportunity of executing the orders left him by Elijah relative to the punishment of the house of Ahab, called one of his minor prophets, whom he ordered to go to Ramoth-gilead, and there anoint Jehu, the grandson of Nimshi, king of Israel. He directed him to perform the ceremony in as private a manner as possible, and after he had so done to come away with the utmost expedition.

When the young prophet arrived at Ramoth-gilead he found Jehu engaged with his officers in consulting what steps should be taken relative to the farther prosecution of the war. On entering the place where they were assembled he told Jehu he had a message to deliver to him in private. Jehu immediately retired with him into an inner chamber, which they had no sooner entered, than the prophet, taking out a vial of oil, poured it on his head, and then addressed him as follows: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the people of the Lord, even over Israel. And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants

"the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the Lord, at the hand of Jezebel. I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha, the son of Ahijah. And the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel, and there shall be none to bury her." Having said this, the prophet opened the door of the room, and hastily departed.

As soon as Jehu returned to the council-chamber, the officers, having, from the appearance of the prophet, entertained a very mean opinion of him, asked who he was, and what he wanted. Jehu at first gave them an evasive answer, but they seeming desirous of being particularly informed, he related to them all that had passed, told them he was a prophet, and that his business was, to anoint him king of Israel, which he had no sooner done, than he quitted the room and hastened away.

Notwithstanding the indifferent opinion the officers had before entertained of the prophet when they understood what he had done, they considered the matter in a very serious light, and universally approving of the choice, immediately declared Jehu king of Israel.

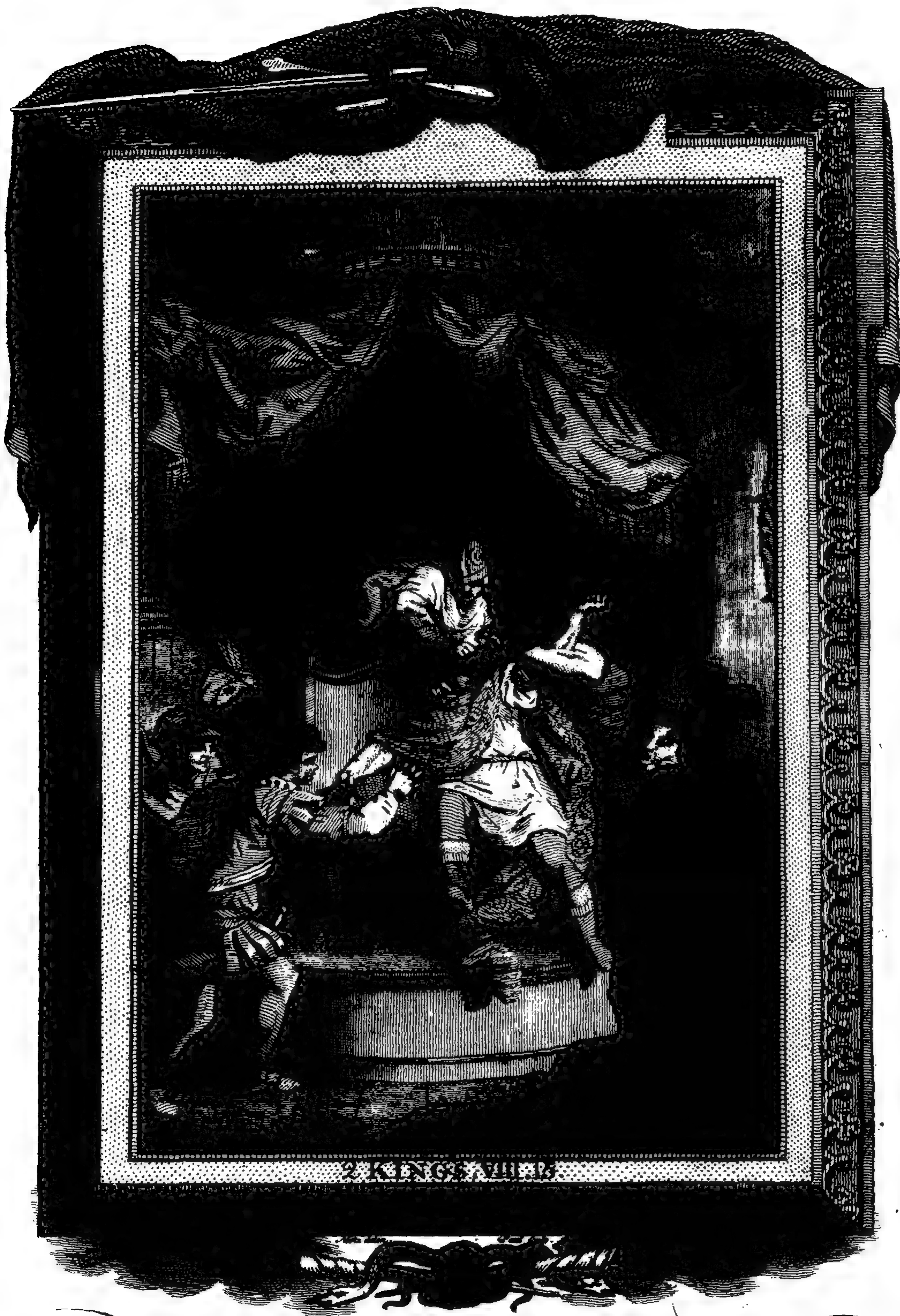
The next day Jehu marched with a considerable body of forces to Jezreel, where Jehoram still continued on account of the wounds he received from the Syrians, and whither Ahaziah, king of Judah, had come to pay him a visit on the occasion.

Jehu's intent was, to get to Jezreel before Jehoram could receive any intelligence of what had passed at Ramoth-gilead, and there to surprise and seize him. But in this he was disappointed by means of a centinel * on the watch-tower of the city, who, perceiving a large body of men approaching, and concluding, that it was Jehu who commanded them, he hastily ran to Jehoram, and acquainted him with the particulars of what he had seen, and his conjectures who they were. In consequence of this Jehoram immediately dispatched a messenger on horseback to the party, in order to know of whom it was composed. The man obeyed, and on making enquiry relative to the state of the army, Jehu, instead of satisfying him, ordered him to fall in the rear and join the march. The centinel on the watch-tower seeing the messenger detained told it to the king, who immediately dispatched a second person on the same errand: but he being likewise detained the two kings mounted each their chariot, and set out to meet Jehu, who continued his march at a very regular and moderate pace. They met (as the Providence of God would have it) near the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, and very probably not far from the spot where that innocent and injured man was stoned to death. On their first meeting, Jehoram questioned Jehu concerning the situation of his troops, saying, *Is it*
peace,

* In times of peace, as well as war, it was customary to have watchmen set on high places, wherever the king was to prevent his being surprized. Thus David, at Jerusalem, was informed by the watchmen, that his sons were escaped from the slaughter of Absalom, when he thought them all lost,

2 Sam. xiii. 34. and therefore Jehoram, who had an army lying before Ramoth-gilead, had great reason to keep a watchful eye upon every person that came to Jezreel, more especially from that quarter.

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BENHADAD, King of Assyria STIFLED to DEATH
by Hazael, who succeeds him on his Throne.

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*Seventy of AHAB'S SONS SLAIN at one time by order of JEHU,
the Son of Jehoshaphat, and their Heads cut off and sent to Jezreel.*

peace, *Jehu?* To which the other replied, *What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel, and her witchcrafts are so many?*

From this answer Jehoram was convinced that Jehu had conspired against him, and was come, in an hostile manner, to avenge the idolatry and wickedness of his mother Jezebel. He therefore, thinking his life in danger, turned his chariot, and endeavoured to save himself by flight. But Jehu prevented him from effecting his design, for at that instant he let fly an arrow at him, which penetrating his heart, he fell dead in his chariot. As soon as Jehu saw this he ordered Bidkar, an officer of his guards, to throw the body into Naboth's field, which was near at hand, and there leave it, whereby was fulfilled the word of the Lord as spoken by the prophet Elijah, namely, that Ahab and his whole race should perish on the very spot, which he had unwarrantably usurped from Naboth.

When Ahaziah, king of Judah, saw the fate of Jehoram, he attempted to make his escape, but was pursued by a party of Jehu's men, who came up with him at Gur, and, as he was sitting in his chariot, gave him a mortal wound, so that, as soon as he reached Megiddo, he died. His remains were removed to Jerusalem, and there interred in the royal sepulchre of his ancestors. He reigned over Judah not quite two years, and was succeeded by his mother Athaliah, who, being an ambitious and enterprising woman, usurped the throne.

In the mean time Jehu made the best of his way to Jezreel, where Jezebel, the queen-mother, resolving to keep up her grandeur to the last, had dressed herself in her best attire, and fixed herself at a window of the gate of the city in order to view the procession. As soon as Jehu came opposite to the window she upbraided him with treachery, and reminded him of the unhappy fate of Zimri, who slew his king and master Elon. Jehu, without making her any answer, called out to her attendants, demanding them immediately to throw her down. She had with her two or three eunuchs, who being terrified at the peremptory demand of Jehu, and the sight of his formidable attendants, immediately obeyed his orders; the walls of the tower, against which she struck in falling, were stained with her blood, and when her body fell to the ground it was so trampled on by the horses as to be quite disfigured. Soon after Jehu arrived at the palace, he gave orders, in respect to the exalted station of Jezebel †, that her domestics should cause her remains to be buried with the honours

due to her rank; but when they went to seek for her body, they found only a part of the skull, the palms of her hands, and her feet; the rest having been devoured by dogs. When Jehu was informed of this circumstance it gave him an additional veneration towards the prophecies of Elijah, who had foretold that, *in the portion of Jezreel should dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel.*

Jehu, having settled himself in the quiet possession of Jezreel, set about devising means for a total extirpation of the family of Ahab. There were at this time seventy sons of that prince in Samaria, under the direction of the nobles, elders, and other great men of the city. Jehu, to effect his intentions, wrote letters to these guardians of the princes, desiring them to chuse out one, whom they thought most fit, to set on the throne of Israel. This he did to sound their inclinations; but they, being well aware of his intent, and not unacquainted with the fate of the two kings, Jehoram and Ahaziah, returned him a very submissive answer, in which they declared themselves at his devotion. *We are thy servants, said they, and will do all that thou shalt bid us; we will not make any king: do thou that which is good in thine eyes.*

This declaration was highly agreeable to Jehu, who determined to take immediate advantage of it. He accordingly wrote other letters to the governors and guardians of the seventy princes, commanding them to send him their heads ‡ the next day to Jezreel. *If ye be mine, said he, and if ye will bearken unto my voice, take ye the heads of the men your master's sons, and come to me to Jezreel by to-morrow this time.*

The nobility and elders of Samaria strictly complied with this second demand of Jehu. They immediately ordered the heads of all the princes to be cut off, and, putting them in baskets, sent them to Jezreel. Jehu, being informed of their arrival, told the messenger to lay them in two heaps at the entrance of the city, and there let them remain that night. The next morning he went to the place, and, after viewing the heads, thus addressed the people: *Ye be righteous: behold, I conspired against my master and slew him: but who slew all these?*

The next step Jehu took was, to destroy all that remained of Ahab's family in Jezreel. This he did with the strictest severity, not only putting to death such as even descended from him, but likewise the great men of his court, together with all his friends and priests, so that not a single person who had been any ways attached to Ahab, or his family, was left.

Having

† Jezebel was the daughter of Eth-baal, king of Tyre; the wife of Ahab, and the mother-in-law of Jehoram, king of Judah, and the aunt of Ahaziah, who was likewise king of Judah.

‡ Besides the accomplishment of the Divine decree, Jehu had this farther design in requesting this cruel service of the rulers, elders and great men of the nation, viz. that thereby he might engage them in the same crime and conspiracy with himself: for, by prevailing with them to murder Ahab's kinsmen in this manner, he tied them to his interest so closely, that if any of the inferior people had been inclined to oppose his designs, they were, by these means, deprived of any man of figure and distinction to head them; and not only so, but by this expedient, Jehu thought like-

wife that he might, in a great measure, justify, at least lessen, the odium of his own conduct.

§ This was as much as to say, "I own, indeed, that I was a great instrument in taking off the late king; but am I more culpable than are the friends, the counsellors, the officers of Ahab? I pretend not to conceal my fault; but the approbation, which the principal men of the nation have given it, in taking up arms against the house of Ahab, and the wonderful success that has attended this enterprize of mine, are not these certain proofs that God has raised me up to execute his decree in this respect? And ought you not to acknowledge, in this case, the interposition of his hand?"

Having done this Jehu left Jezreel, and set out for Samaria, the capital of the Israelitish dominions. On his way he overtook a company, consisting of forty-two people; and asking them who they were, and where they were going, they replied, that they were relations of Ahaziah, king of Judah, and were going to pay a visit to the court of Samaria, being ignorant of the fate of the two late kings, Jehoram and Ahaziah. As soon as Jehu understood who they were, he ordered his guards to seize them, and the whole forty-two people were immediately put to death.

When Jehu had got some way farther, he met Jehonadab, the son of Rechab, a man of great strictness and sobriety of life, who applauding his zealous endeavours for extirpating the race of Ahab, he took him into his chariot, saying, *Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord.*

The first thing Jehu did after his arrival at Samaria was, to put to death all the descendants of Ahab that could be found in that city, so that in a short time the whole race were totally extirpated. He next formed the resolution of destroying the temple of Baal, together with all the false prophets and idolatrous priests, which design he carried into execution by the following stratagem. Calling together an assembly of the people, he told them that he was determined to pay a more strict attention to the worship of Baal than had been hitherto observed: *Ahab, said he, served Baal a little; but Jehu shall serve him much.* He then issued out a proclamation, in which he told the people that he intended to offer an uncommon sacrifice to Baal, and commanded all his priests, prophets and worshippers, on pain of death, to be present at the solemnity. The people strictly obeyed this injunction, and on the appointed day assembled at the temple, when the priests and prophets were presented with those vestments in which they were accustomed to be habited at the performance of their religious ceremonies. When Jehu arrived at the temple, accompanied by Jehonadab, he found it full even from one end to the other, so strictly did the people pay obedience to his proclamation; and on his entering it, he commanded all persons to leave it who were not the true worshippers of Baal. This being done the priests proceeded to perform their usual ceremonies, with which they went on without interruption for some time, till at length, having made an end of offering up the burnt-offering, they were suddenly surprized by a great number of Jehu's guards, who, by his orders, put every one of them to the sword. After this they broke down the image of Baal, together with

all the other images in the place, the whole of which they formed into one pile and committed to the flames. They then totally destroyed the temple, and, that the place whereon it stood might, in future ages, be looked upon as despicable, they adapted it for the reception of all kinds of filth.

Thus did Jehu entirely destroy the family of Ahab, and the worship of Baal, in the kingdom of Israel; which proceedings were highly approved of by the Almighty, who was pleased to entail the crown of Israel on Jehu's family to the fourth generation.

Though Jehu had given some very strong proofs of wishing to root out idolatry, yet there was little stability in his heart. Policy prevailed against religion, and he was induced to continue the Old idolatry, even where he had destroyed the New. He suffered the golden calves, which had been set up by Jeroboam, still to remain, and laid not the least restraint on those who worshipped them. These negligences gave great offence to God, who, to make him sensible of his displeasure, was pleased to stir up Hazael, king of Syria, to invade his country. He took several of his frontier towns, by which he opened a way to make ravages in various parts of his kingdom, especially in the country beyond Jordan, where the tribes of Manasseh, Gad and Reuben in particular suffered the most violent oppression.

In a word, we may say of Jehu that, as his conduct was of a mixed nature, so God rewarded his obedience, but punished his idolatry. He continued to be harassed by Hazael during the remainder of his reign, the whole of which was twenty-eight years, when he died, and was buried in the city of Samaria.

Though Jehu did well in executing that which was right in the sight of God with respect to the abolition of the worship of Baal, yet he was certainly a bad man in his heart. His obstinately persisting in the sin of Jeroboam, by preserving the golden calves, and rather countenancing than endeavouring to restrain those who worshipped them, may be justly alledged against him as an argument of his false-heartedness in all the other actions of his life. The reasons why he continued in this kind of idolatry were much the same as those given by the institutor, namely, lest, by permitting his subjects to go to the place appointed for Divine worship, he might open a way for their return to the obedience of the house of David; and not only so, but disoblige likewise a great part of the nobility of the nation, who, by this time, had been long accustomed, and warmly attached, to the worship of the golden calves. Herein, however, he made a clear discovery

|| It may be asked how all the worshippers of Baal could be induced, after Jehu's conduct, to assemble together? To which it may be replied, that as Jehu was a person of known indifference in matters of religion, who in this respect had always conformed to the humours of the court, and in the reign of king Ahab had been a strenuous worshipper of Baal, the people could not tell when they read his proclamation of a great feast to Baal, but that he had returned in good earnest to the religion which he had once embraced, and only deserted for a time, in complacency to others. But whether

they deluded themselves into this persuasion or not, they knew by experience that Jehu was a man of a fierce and bloody temper, who would not fail to put his threats into execution; and therefore reading in the same proclamation, *Whoever shall be wanting, he shall not live,* they found themselves reduced to this sad dilemma, either to go or die; and therefore they thought it the wisest method to run the hazard, and throw themselves upon his mercy; having this at least to plead for themselves, that they were not disobedient to his commands.

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II KINGS, X. 25.

DESTRUCTION of the TEMPLE of BAAL,
with its priests, false prophets, & worshippers, by order of
JEHU, King of ISRAEL.

discovery of his folly and his sin, in not daring to trust God with the preservation of that kingdom, which he had so freely bestowed upon him. For these transgressions he was severely punished, his subjects rendered miserable, and his reign ingloriously closed.

Jehu was succeeded on the throne of Israel by his son Jehoahaz, who, to preserve the crown from uniting with that of Judah, pursued the same methods his predecessor had done with respect to worshipping the golden calves. For this God was pleased to afflict both him and his people, by delivering him into the hands of Hazael and his son Benhadad (the third Syrian king of that name) who reduced him to so low an ebb that he had no more than fifty horsemen, ten chariots, and ten thousand foot soldiers left. At length, from the many defeats he had received, and the grievous oppression under which he laboured, grown weary of life, as well as government, after a very troublesome reign of seventeen years, he died, and was succeeded by his son Joash.—The particulars that attended the reign of this prince we shall reserve for the next chapter; and here return to relate such occurrences as took place in the kingdom of Judah.

When Athaliah, daughter of Ahab king of Israel, and widow of Jehoram king of Judah, was informed of the devastations which Jehu had made in the iniquitous family of her father, she formed the resolution of revenging their deaths by so effectually extirpating the line of David, as not to suffer a man to escape her vengeance who should boast an hereditary claim to the throne of Judah. To effect this she gave orders that not only the children of Ahaziah, but likewise their offspring, should be all put to death. These orders were accordingly put in execution, but, from a circumstance that occurred, were not, as she intended, fully accomplished. At this time Jehosheba, the sister of Ahaziah, by the father's side, was married to Jehoiada the high-priest; and while Athaliah's executioners were murdering all the rest, she stole away Jehoash, the son of Ahaziah, and secretly conveyed him to her own dwelling. From hence she removed him to an apartment in the temple, where she kept him concealed, (unknown to any person whatever except her husband) during the whole six years of Athaliah's reign over Judah.

After the expiration of six years Jehoiada, uncle to Jehoash, resolved to place his nephew on the throne of his ancestors. To effect this he got over to his interest most of the officers of the army, together with many of the leading men of the kingdom, whom he prevailed on to unite their endeavours towards investing the young prince with the regal dignity. Having bound themselves by an oath of fidelity and secrecy, they dispersed in order to summon the priests, Levites, and principal men of the tribes, in the name of the high-priest, to meet, with all expedition, at Jerusalem. As soon as they were assembled Jehoiada informed them that, on condition of engaging in an oath of secrecy, he would communicate to them a matter of the highest importance to the public weal, wherein he should have occasion to request their assistance. He then administered the oath to them; after which,

pointing to Jehoash, he addressed them in words to this effect: "Behold your king: he is the only surviving branch of the house of David, whose posterity it was promised should reign over us. It is my advice that you divide yourselves into three parties, one to guard the person of the king, and the other two to secure the gates of the temple, that none may be permitted to enter (except the priests and Levites) on pain of death."

The whole assembly unanimously approved of the conduct of the high-priest, whose next business was, to open a magazine which had been deposited in the temple by David, and to deliver to them arrows, lances, and other implements of war. The different parties being placed in their respective situations, Jehoiada brought forth the young prince, placed the crown on his head, put the book of the law into his hand, anointed him, and then proclaimed him king of Judah, the people expressing their approbation by the loudest acclamations.

The shouts of the people reaching the palace greatly alarmed Athaliah, who, immediately summoning her guards to assemble, repaired to the temple, where she gained a ready admittance, but her attendants were not suffered to accompany her. As soon as she entered the place, to her great surprize she saw the young king seated on a throne which had been erected for the purpose, the crown of royalty on his head, and the people and great men about him expressing their joy on the occasion. Such an unexpected sight we may very naturally suppose stung Athaliah to the quick, who, after rending her cloaths, vehemently cried out *Treason, treason*. But Jehoiada soon silenced her. He ordered the guards immediately to conduct her out of the temple, and put her to death, saying, that place was not to be polluted by the blood of a person so abandoned to wickedness; and that whoever made any attempt to rescue or assist her should be put to the sword. In obedience to these orders, the guards conducted Athaliah to the stable-gate belonging to the palace, where, without any opposition, they put her to death.

As soon as the sentence pronounced by Jehoiada was executed upon Athaliah, he again assembled the populace in the temple, and administered to them the oath of allegiance to their new king. He then made two covenants, one between the Lord, and the king and the people, and the other between the king and the people only. By the first of these the people were to restore the true worship of God, continue it, and root out all idolatry. The other was, that the king should govern according to law, and that the people should pay a proper reverence to him as their legal sovereign.

These ceremonies being over the whole multitude hastened to the temple, which Jehoram and his wife Athaliah had built during the reign of Ahab king of Israel, near Jerusalem, and dedicated to the idol Baal. After destroying the image of Baal, and every kind of ornament within, they levelled the whole structure with the ground, and put to death one Matan, a priest, who was then in waiting.

Jehoiada, agreeable to the institution of David, committed the care of the temple of Jerusalem

saalem to the priests and Levites; and, according to the law of Moses, appointed a solemn sacrifice and incense to be offered each day. Having made these and some other reforms in the service of the temple, Jehoiada, with all the rulers and

officers, followed by the whole multitude, conducted the young king to the palace, seated him on the royal throne, and put him into quiet possession of the kingdom of Judah.

C H A P. V.

Jehoash reigns well during the life of his uncle Jehoiada. He collects money to repair the temple. He suffers the people to forsake the true worship of God, for which he is greatly distressed by Hazael king of Syria. He is afflicted with a most violent distemper, and at length assassinated by two of his domestics. Amaziab, his son succeeds him in the government, and punishes the two men that murdered his father. He engages the Edomites, obtains a compleat victory, and puts to death 10,000 men whom he had taken prisoners. He falls into idolatry, is vanquished by Joash king of Israel, and afterwards murdered by his own subjects. Joash pays a visit to the prophet Elisha, who bestows on him his blessing, and assures him of victory over his enemies. Death of Elisha. A dead man, by being placed in Elisha's tomb, and touching his body, is restored to life. Joash engages the king of Syria, and obtains a victory three different times. He dies, and is succeeded by his son Jeroboam, who enlarges the kingdom of Israel, and after whose death an inter-regnum takes place of twenty-two years.

JEHOSH, king of Judah, began his reign when seven years of age, at which time Jehu was in the seventh year of his reign over Israel. He was a just and religious prince so long as the good priest Jehoiada lived, and restored the worship of the true God; but he did not destroy the altars that were erected in the high places.

Some time after Jehoash had been on the throne of Judah he formed the resolution of repairing the temple, which had suffered great injury in the days of Jehoram and Athaliah. For this purpose he directed his uncle Jehoiada to send certain priests and Levites to the several parts of his dominions, in order to raise a supply of money for repairing the temple, which was to be done by laying a tax on the people at a certain sum per head.

Jehoiada being convinced that the people were not in a disposition to apply their money towards the ends proposed, omitted to put the king's commands in force, and they remained unexecuted till the twenty-third year of his reign. Jehoash then sent for the high priest, together with the priests and Levites, whom he censured for their negligence, and repeated his orders for having them set about the necessary methods for raising the contribution required.

A variety of expedients were suggested by Jehoiada for raising the money; and at length he adopted the following, as promising to be the least burthensome to the people. A chest made of wood was placed over the altar, through the cover of which was cut a slit for the purpose of admitting donations; which being done, it was recommended to the people to contribute towards the intended work in proportion to their zeal for the holy religion. The public, being perfectly satisfied with this mode of collecting

the necessary sum, brought contributions of gold and silver in great abundance. The high-priest was entrusted with the key of the chest, which, in the presence of the king, was opened every day; and after the money was counted it was registered by the clerk of the treasury. When it was found that sufficient treasure was accumulated for beginning the work, masons, carpenters, and other artificers were employed, and in a short time every breach throughout the whole building was compleatly repaired.

About this time the good and pious Jehoiada, high-priest, and uncle to the king, paid the debt of nature in the 130th year of his age. He was universally beloved by the people, and in consideration of his steady attachment to the house of David, and his exemplary virtues, his remains were deposited in the sepulchre of the kings.

The death of Jehoiada was productive of fatal consequences both to the king and people. The heads of the court, who were idolaters in their hearts, taking advantage of the weakness of Jehoash, by their crafty management and insinuations, first obtained a licence for themselves to worship such idols as they should think fit, and then proceeded to delude him into the like apostacy. These examples soon operated on the people in general, who, forsaking the temple of the Lord, addicted themselves to the worship of idols and groves consecrated to false gods, so that the true and established religion was held in the utmost attempt.

These impieties were highly offensive to God, who was pleased to send several prophets, to expostulate both with the king and people on their abominable apostacy, and to threaten them with a severe punishment, unless they immediately reformed, and returned to the true religion. But the vengeance denounced against them, and the repeated

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2 CHRONICLES XXIV 21

ZACHARIAH
Son of Jehoiada, the High Priest, Stoned to Death by order of
KING JOASH.

repeated examples of the fate of their predecessors and families, upon whom the judgments of heaven had been inflicted as a punishment for the enormity of their crimes, were not sufficient to effect a reformation. At length, the prophet Zachariah, son to Jehoiada the late high-priest, and uncle to the king, was induced to remonstrate against the general impiety. This he did in such strong terms, that the king was offended at his freedom, and, forgetting the kindness of his father and mother, to whom he was indebted for his own life, gave orders to have him destroyed. A band of ruffians were appointed to put these orders in execution, who, meeting with him in one of the courts of the temple, stoned him to death. Zachariah, with his dying breath, appealed to God as his judge and witness that he suffered only for having administered good counsel, and for being the son of a man who had effectually laboured in the service of his king and country.

It was not long before the great avenger of all violence and wrong was pleased to punish Jehoash for his base treatment of his servant and prophet Zachariah. The very next year Hazael, king of Syria, marched with a considerable army into his dominions, and having made himself master of Gath, proceeded towards Jerusalem, killing in his way all the princes and great men who had seduced their king to idolatry. Jehoash was in no condition to make any resistance: and therefore, to redeem himself from the miseries of a siege, he took all the rich vessels which his ancestors had devoted to the service of God, and all the gold that was laid up in the treasures of the temple (besides what was found in the royal treasury) and sent them as a present to Hazael, in order to prevail on him to withdraw his troops.

The largeness of the bribe tempted Hazael, who, accepting it, immediately returned with his forces to Damascus. But the next year the Syrians again marched into the territories of Judah, and though Hazael was not with them, they defeated the forces which Jehoash sent against them, made great havock in the country, entered Jerusalem, put some of the princes and rulers to the sword, and treated Jehoash himself with no small indignity and contempt.

But this was not all the punishment to be inflicted on the wicked Jehoash. No sooner was the Syrian army departed than the distemper, or rather a complication of distempers with which some time before God had afflicted him, grew worse and worse, so that he was at length obliged to be confined in his bed. While he was in this situation Zabad and Jehoazabad*, two of his own servants, took the opportunity of murdering him, in revenge for the death of the prophet

Zachariah. Jehoash reigned forty years, and was buried in the city of Jerusalem; but his impious courses had rendered him so obnoxious in the eyes of the people, that his body was denied a place in the royal sepulchre.

Jehoash was succeeded in the government of Judah by his son Amaziah, who, at the time of his accession, was twenty-five years of age. For some time he behaved tolerably well, though he followed the example of his predecessors, in suffering the high places to remain, and permitting the people there to offer sacrifice and burn incense.

When Amaziah found himself fully established on the throne, he very justly took revenge of the two traitors who had murdered his father, by ordering them to be put to death †. He did not, however, do any injury to their children, because it was contrary to the law of Moses, which expressly says, *The fathers shall not die for the children, neither shall the children die for the fathers, but every man shall die for his own sin.*

Amaziah, having thus revenged the death of his father, directed his attention to the political state of his kingdom. The Edomites, in the reign of Jehoram, king of Judah, had revolted and chosen a king for themselves, in which state they remained till the present time, when Amaziah formed the resolution of reducing them to their former subjection. For this purpose he new-modelled his army, and upon a general muster found them to be no less than 300,000 fighting men. But not thinking these sufficient for the intended expedition, he hired a great number of Joash king of Israel, for which he paid him the compliment of an hundred talents of silver.

When Amaziah had got his combined army ready for marching against the Edomites, he received a visit from a prophet, who, by the direction of God, dissuaded him from employing the auxiliaries borrowed of Joash king of Israel, upon which he immediately discharged them, and resolved to attack the Edomites with his own people only.

The hired subjects of the king of Israel, thinking themselves shamefully dismissed, were greatly exasperated against Amaziah; and therefore in their return home, they plundered all the towns in their way belonging to Judah, killed no less than three thousand men, and carried away a considerable booty, in order to make amends for the plunder they had promised themselves in going against the Edomites.

In the mean time Amaziah, at the head of his own forces only, marched against the revoltors. The two armies met in the valley of Salt ‡, where a desperate battle ensued, which proved greatly

* These two murderers, whose fathers were Jews, but their mothers aliens, (the one being a Moabite's and the other an Ammonite's) were probably of the king's bed-chamber, and having constant access to him, might more easily accomplish their design. However, the king was so weak and feeble that he could not make any resistance, and had fallen into such contempt and disesteem, that his guards cared not what became of him.

† It appears that these two assassins continued to be men

who possessed great interest and power at court, even after they had murdered their king; for his son retained them in his service for some time, nor durst he venture to execute justice on them until he was well settled in his authority, and divested all those of power who were their friends and abettors.

‡ The Valley of Salt lay towards the land of Edom, and was so called either from the salt springs, which were therein, or from salt being dug up in the place.

greatly in favour of Amaziah, who slew ten thousand on the spot, and took ten thousand prisoners. From hence he marched to Selah, the metropolis of Arabia Petræa, of which he soon possessed himself, and, from the top of the rock whereon the town stood, caused the ten thousand, whom he had made prisoners, to be thrown head long down, so that they were all dashed to pieces.

Amaziah, elated with his conquest over the Edomites, and claiming too much merit to himself, forgot the God of battle, and relinquished the true worship of his Divine protector for that of idolatry; for, on his return to Jerusalem he brought with him the idols of Edom, to which he paid adoration, and offered incense. This so highly offended the Almighty that he sent a prophet to reprove him for his apostacy; but instead of paying any regard to what he said, he bade him hold his tongue, threatening if he did not, he should be put to death. The prophet told him he would desist, but that the vengeance of heaven would be the certain consequence if he persisted in his idolatry.

A short time after this Amaziah, having resolved to resent the affront put upon him by the subjects of the king of Israel, whom he had dismissed from assisting him against the Edomites, and who had committed such ravages in different parts of his dominions in their return home, sent a very haughty letter to Joash, in which he challenged him to meet and engage him in a pitched battle. Joash treated this message with the utmost contempt, and, in return, sent Amaziah a parabolic answer to this effect: "A thistle, (said he) that grew on Mount Lebanon sent, on a certain time, to a cedar tree growing on the same spot, saying, Give thy daughter in marriage to my son; at which time a wild beast passing by trod the thistle to the ground. Learn hence to lower your ambition, nor aim at things so much above you. Be cautious lest your pride, on having conquered the Edomites, should lead you to such actions as may, in time, produce the loss of your kingdom and life."

This answer enraged Amaziah to the highest degree, and Providence leaving him to the influence of his own passions, he made all the necessary preparations for engaging the army of the Israelites. When Joash found that Amaziah persisted in his intentions of fighting, he marched with his forces against him, and the two armies met at a place called Bethshemesh, a town belonging to the king of Judah's dominions. The troops were no sooner drawn up on each side than those of Amaziah were so dispirited, that they gave way on the first onset, and consulting their own safety, immediately fled, leaving their king to the mercy of his antagonist §.

Amaziah being thus a prisoner to Joash, the latter marched with his army in great triumph to Jerusalem, whither he no sooner arrived, than he broke down all the fortifications of the wall, from the gate of Ephraim to the Corner gate, the whole being about four hundred cubits. Having done this he entered the city with the greater part of his troops, and proceeded first to the temple and then to the palace, both of which he plundered of their richest valuables, and then leaving Amaziah, returned with the spoil to Samaria.

Amaziah lived about fifteen years after being thus shamefully defeated by Joash, king of Israel; but we do not read of any thing more remarkable concerning him, except that he still persisted in his idolatry, and continued till his death to remain under the Divine displeasure. Towards the latter part of his life he carried his idolatrous practices to such lengths as to fall under the contempt of the greater part of his subjects; insomuch that some of the principal people of Jerusalem formed a conspiracy against his life. Amaziah, having received intimation of the design of his enemies, endeavoured to escape, by flying to Lachish, a town situated on the frontiers of the country of the Philistines. But these endeavours to save himself proved fruitless, for the conspirators sent proper persons after him, who, taking a favourable opportunity that offered, put him privately to death. When his friends understood what had befallen him, they went to Lachish, from whence they brought his body (without any state or formality) to Jerusalem, and interred it in the sepulchre of his ancestors. Thus died Amaziah king of Judah, after a reign of twenty-nine years, during which time he not only offended God in the highest degree, but made himself, in the end, universally detested by his subjects. He was succeeded on the throne by his son Uzziah, (otherwise called Azariah) the transactions of whose life we shall defer to the next chapter, and here return to the particular occurrences that took place in the kingdom of Israel.

Some time after Joash had ascended the throne of Israel, it happened that the prophet Elisha fell sick of a disease, whereof he died. Joash, having always entertained the highest respect for the prophet, and paid him the greatest reverence, went to pay him a visit on this melancholy occasion. After he had expressed his grief for the situation in which he found him, and pointed out the great loss all Israel would have by his death, the prophet first bestowed on him his blessing, and then emblematically predicted to him the future success he would have over his enemies the Syrians. He bade him take a bow and arrows, open the window eastward, and shoot. Joash did as he was ordered, upon which the

§ The manner in which Josephus relates the defeat and captivity of Amaziah is as follows: "No sooner (says he) were his men advanced within sight of the enemy, but they were instantly struck with such terror and consternation, that they turned their backs without striking a blow; and, flying several ways, left Amaziah prisoner in the hands of his enemies, who refused to give him quarter upon any other terms, than that the citizens of Jerusalem

"should set open their gates, and receive him and his victorious army into the town; which, between the pinch of necessity, and the love of life, they were prevailed upon to do: so that Joash entered the place in his triumphal chariot through a breach of three hundred cubits in the wall (which he caused to be made) with his prisoner Amaziah marching before him."

the prophet said, *The arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek.* Elisha then bade Joash take the arrows and smite them on the ground. The king did as directed three times, and then stopped: upon which Elisha said, *Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice.* Joash, finding the prophet angry with him, took his leave and departed, soon after which Elisha paid the debt of nature.

Though this was the last prediction of Elisha, yet it was not the last miracle, for he performed one even after his death. As a company of Israelites were going to bury a dead person, they espied at a distance a band of men making towards them, upon which, in order to escape them, they threw the corpse into Elisha's tomb. As soon as the body of the dead man touched that of Elisha, life was instantly restored, he got upon his feet, arose out of the tomb, and followed those who had thrown him into it ||.

This was a most singular miracle indeed, but whoever seriously reflects on it will easily discover that no innate power in the bones of Elisha could produce so wonderful an effect. It was the immediate work and operation of God himself, who was thus pleased not only to give his people a proof of the Divine mission of his prophet, but also of that future resurrection from the dead, which is fully revealed to us in the Gospel. A very celebrated divine remarks, that this was a clear symbol and prophecy of the resurrection of Our Blessed Redeemer, only with this material difference, that Elisha raised a dead body without raising himself, whereas Christ not only raised himself, but gives life to all those who believe in him.

The miracle performed by Elisha after his death (which was a Divine confirmation of the truth of all his prophecies) could not fail of being a powerful means to encourage king Joash to engage in a war with the Syrians, more

especially as he had assured him he should obtain a conquest over them three different times. Nor was his success little short of what the prophet had predicted; for, in three pitched battles, he defeated Benhadad (his father Hazael being then dead) recovered all the cities that had been taken from his father Jehoahaz, and re-united them to the kingdom of Israel.

After this Joash lived quiet from all his enemies, till Jehoash, king of Judah, gave him the small disturbance we have already mentioned. From this time we hear nothing more remarkable concerning him; and may therefore conclude, that, he died in peace, and was succeeded by his son Jeroboam, the second person of that name who ruled over the kingdom of Israel.

Jeroboam II. came to the throne of Israel in the fifteenth year of Amaziah, king of Judah. He received great assistance, in the beginning of his reign from the prophet Jonah, by the following of whose advice he proved successful in many military enterprizes. He recovered a large territory which several kings had taken from his predecessors, even all the country from Libanus on the north, to the lake Asphaltites on the south; but especially on the east of Jordan, whereby he greatly enlarged the conquests which his father had made before him.

In the days of David and Solomon, the cities of Damascus and Hamoth had been tributary to the kings of Judah; but having long revolted from Israel, Jeroboam conquered them again, and made them pay homage to him, as they had formerly done to his predecessors*.

Jeroboam II. reigned over Israel forty-one years, during the course of which he proved successful in a variety of the most dangerous enterprizes. He died with much honour and renown, and was buried with his ancestors; but, whether through wars abroad, or discord and dissention at home, he left the government in so confused a state, that, after his decease, there was an interregnum for the space of twenty-two years.

greatest difficulties.

* To some part of this king's reign must be referred the action which we read (in 1 Chron. v. 18) was performed by the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, who, mustering together forty-four thousand seven hundred and sixty able men, made war upon the Hagarites; and being assisted by the Lord, to whom they addressed themselves in time of battle, they obtained a complete victory. The booty they made themselves masters of was very considerable, consisting of 50,000 camels, 250,000 sheep, 2000 asses, and 100,000 prisoners, besides great numbers slain in the battle. Thus did they prove victorious, because God was engaged on their side; and these two tribes and an half, having dispossessed the Hagarites, dwelt in peace and quietness from that period till the time of the Babylonish captivity.

|| It appears, from this very remarkable circumstance, that Elisha died near the borders of Syria; for the people in the east were mostly buried where they died. At the time when the man here mentioned died, the Syrians had made several inroads into the land of Israel; and this was one of their straggling parties, which is here called a band. Men of such exalted characters as the prophet Elisha had monuments of stone, in the form of our square tombs, wherein their bodies were deposited, and therefore, the men who carried the dead body here spoken of flung it into the tomb of the prophet, that they might be the more able to provide for their own safety. That the man should be restored to life by his body touching the bones of the prophet was, no doubt, a very great miracle, and, most probably, was wrought, that the people might be convinced, if they imitated the conduct of Elisha, his God would save and deliver them out of the

C H A P. VI.

Containing the most material incidents recorded in the Life and Transactions of the Prophet Jonah.

DURING the time the throne of Israel continued vacant after the death of Jeroboam II. the prophet Jonah, who had done him many services during his reign, received a Divine commission to execute a matter of business of the most serious and important nature. The Ninevites had for a long time lived in the greatest wickedness, upon which the Almighty was pleased to command Jonah to go to Nineveh, and denounce to the people, that he would destroy that great city, because of the sins of its inhabitants, or (as the Scripture expresses it) *because their wickedness was come up before him.*

Jonah, instead of obeying the Divine command, directed his course another way, and intending to retire to Tarshish, a town in Cilicia, embarked on board a vessel at Joppa †, a port situated on the Mediterranean Sea. But they had not been long sailed before God, to make it appear that nothing undertaken against his will can take effect, and that he accomplisheth his designs even by the resistance and opposition men make against them, caused a great tempest to arise, which so alarmed the mariners that, after labouring some time in opposition to the force of the waves, they found themselves in the most imminent danger of being shipwrecked, and therefore, in order to lighten their vessel, threw their lading into the sea.

In the mean time Jonah, sensible that the hand of Providence was in this extraordinary tempest, and being grieved for his disobedience

and rebellion against the Lord, was gone down into the hold, where he fell fast asleep; but this sound sleep rather arose from his trouble and affliction than from any satisfaction, or assurance he had of safety in the midst of such imminent danger, into which he had not only plunged himself, but likewise all those who were with him in the vessel.

The master of the ship, not thinking it proper that Jonah should lie and sleep while all the crew and passengers were either labouring to save the vessel, or praying to their idols, awoke him, bidding him arise and call upon his God that they might be saved from perishing. This however, proving of none effect, and the master finding that the violence of the storm eluded and frustrated all their endeavours, and that the fierceness of it still increased more and more, suspected that this unusual tempest was occasioned by the extraordinary crimes of some person on board the vessel, and therefore proposed that all who were in it should cast lots, in order to know who was the author and occasion of their danger.

This proposition being universally approved of was immediately carried into execution, when the lot fell upon Jonah. In consequence of this the mariners asked him who he was, and what he had done, to stir up the anger of heaven against them and himself. Jonah frankly acknowledged that he was a Jew, who worshipped the God of heaven; and not only a Jew, but a prophet like-

wife,

¶ The remaining part of the History of the Old Testament consists, in a great measure, of the proceedings of the most distinguished prophets, who were appointed, by Divine Providence, at different periods, to work upon the minds of the people, and endeavour, by a variety of means, to bring them from a state of idolatry, to a thorough sense of the worship of the true God. The proceedings of these prophets we shall take notice of at the respective periods they occurred, they being, in the Sacred Writings, not ranged according to the order of time in which they happened. This is supposed to have arisen through the negligence of the priests in those days, who had the charge of registering and keeping them: for the manner was, when any prophet had written a prophecy, he caused it to be fixed to the gate of the temple, where it remained for a certain number of days, that all might read and take notice of it. After it had stood there the appointed time, the priests took it into the temple to record it in a book; but for want of due care to enter them in course as they were written, they left them in that disorderly manner in which we now find them. But besides this, it must be considered that many of the prophets, especially Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel, wrote in very troublesome times: Ezekiel and Daniel when in captivity at Babylon, and Jeremiah when all things both in church and state were in the greatest confusion and disorder at Jerusalem; and the first copy of his book was destroyed by king Jehoiakim. From these considerations it is not to be wondered at that the writings of the different prophets should be misplaced; and instead of lamenting this defect, we ought to be thankful that they have been preserved at all.

† Joppa is a sea-port town in Palestine, upon the Mediterranean, and was formerly the only port which the Jews had upon that coast, whither all the materials, that were sent from Tyre, towards the building of Solomon's temple, were brought and landed. The town itself is very antient, for profane authors reckon it was built before the flood, and derive the name of it from Joppa, the daughter of Elolus, and the wife of Cepheus, who was the founder of it. Others are rather inclined to believe, that it was built by Japhet, and from him had the name of Japho, which was afterwards corrupted into Joppa, but is now generally called Jaffa, which comes nearer to the first appellation. The town is situated in a fine plain, between Jamnia to the south; Cæsarea or Palestine to the north; and Rama or Ramula to the east; but, at present, it is in a poor and mean condition; nor is its port by any means good, by reason of the rocks, which project into the sea. The chief thing, for which this place was famous, in antient pagan history is, the exposition of Andromeda, the daughter of Cepheus, king of Egypt, who, for her mother's pride, was bound to a rock, in order to be devoured by a sea-monster, but was delivered by the valour and bravery of Perseus, who afterwards married her: for in the times of Mela and Pliny, there was some marks remaining (as they themselves testify) of the chains, wherewith this royal virgin was bound to the rock, which projects into the sea. But all this is mere fiction, first founded upon the adventure of Jonah, who set sail from this port, and then improved with the addition of some particular circumstances.

wife, who had been ordered to go to Nineveh, but, having disobeyed his orders, was now endeavouring to flee from the Divine presence: that, since he found it was impossible to do that, and every person's life, on his account, was in such imminent danger, he wished them to throw him overboard, as that only could be the means of abating the storm, and thereby securing their safety.

The mariners, being not a little surprized at this free and unconcerned confession of Jonah, by which he doomed himself to death, conceived more pity for him than he seemed to have for himself, and therefore endeavoured to save his life by rowing hard in hopes of reaching land. But finding that all their endeavours were in vain, and that the waves ran still higher against them, they at length threw him overboard, expressing their reluctance in so doing, and acquitting themselves of having committed any cruelty, in these words: *We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee.*

No sooner was the prophet Jonah thrown into the sea than the tempest abated, and a calm immediately ensued, which struck such an impression on the mariners, that they vowed to offer up sacrifices to the Lord as soon as they should reach the shore.

In the mean time the Lord had prepared a great fish † to swallow up Jonah, who being in the belly thereof, and calling to mind his own disobedience, and the great mercy of God towards him, sang praises unto the Lord from that living grave; where, after he had continued three days and three nights, the fish, at God's command, vomited him out on the dry land.

Thus we see, that life came forth victorious and triumphant from the very entrails of death, to be a lively representation of that stupendous and ineffable victory which Our Blessed Redeemer was to obtain afterwards over death and hell; when, after Jonah had freely offered himself to be cast into the sea for the preservation of the mariners and passengers on board the ship, and after he had been three days and nights in the body of the fish, he arose from thence full of life by a glorious resurrection.

After God had so mercifully preserved Jonah, and delivered him from the great fish, he commanded him a second time to go to Nineveh, there to preach to the people, and declare the commission he had before given him. Jonah, instead of thinking, as he had done before, how to avoid executing the Divine command, readily set about the business. The city of Nineveh was (as the Scripture informs us) three days journey in length, so that when Jonah arrived at the place, he travelled one day in it, declaring to the people, as he passed along, that in forty days the whole city should be destroyed.

The Ninevites, terrified at this denunciation, and believing the word of God by his prophet, with an humble faith proclaimed a fast, and put

on sackcloth from the greatest of them to the least, to the end that their sorrow and repentance might be as general as had been their corruption and sins; and that as no age, sex or quality had been free from contributing to the guilt, so none might be exempted from such penance as was likely to atone for their transgressions. The king himself no sooner heard of the destruction that threatened him and his subjects, than he quitted his throne, threw off his royal robes and ornaments, put on sackcloth, and sat in ashes. He likewise issued out an edict, which he caused to be proclaimed throughout the city, that neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, should, for a time, eat or drink any thing; and that all his subjects should cry mightily to God, and every one turn from their evil ways; "for, said he, who can tell but God will take pity on us, and turn away his fierce anger that we perish not."

Thus did the inhabitants of a great and powerful city humble and abase themselves before God, even from the king upon the throne, to the poorest and most contemptible subject. As, therefore, they had thus with sincerity of heart acknowledged their transgressions, and changed their evil ways, God was pleased to lay aside the sentence he had denounced against them by the mouth of his prophet, and to suffer them still to live, that they might acknowledge his goodness, and, by their future conduct, avoid a repetition of the like dreadful denunciation.

The conduct of the Ninevites, on this occasion, is a great and illustrious example of sincere and hearty repentance; and therefore we ought often to set it before our eyes, that, as we have been, and still are, followers of them in sin and wickedness, so we may endeavour to imitate and express their repentance. And the rather, because Our Saviour assures us, that this example of the Ninevites shall confound and condemn all those who, living under the preaching of the gospel, do still continue in impenitence and unbelief; because the menaces he has pronounced in the gospel against impenitent sinners ought, without comparison, to be more dreadful and terrible to us, than those of Jonah were to the inhabitants of Nineveh.

When Jonah found that God had repealed the sentence denounced against the Ninevites, he was greatly displeased, fearing lest he should be accounted a false prophet, because the judgment threatened was not executed according to his prediction. Though, indeed, properly speaking, he was very far from being a false prophet: in declaring that Nineveh should be destroyed in forty days, he declared nothing but the very truth; for (as St. Austin excellently observes) though that city still subsisted as to its buildings and walls, yet it was most happily destroyed by the repentance and conversion of its inhabitants; for wicked, licentious, riotous and haughty Nineveh was destroyed and overthrown, and an humble, penitent, and self-denying city now supplied its place.

Such

† It has been a generally received opinion that this fish was a whale, but that such an opinion is erroneous will appear from the following observations: First, we never hear of whales being found in the Mediterranean Sea; and se-

condly, the throats of the largest whales are not wide enough to swallow a man. It was a large fish, of which there are many in those seas, but the particular species cannot be pointed out.

Such was the weakness of Jonah (notwithstanding his being divinely inspired) that he suffered his fears on being accounted a false prophet to make so deep an impression on him, and had, on the occasion, so far given himself up to grief and discontent, that he beseeched of God to take away his life. *O Lord, said he, take, I beseech thee, my life from me: for it is better for me to die than to live.* But the Almighty was pleased to bear with this sinful weakness of his prophet Jonah, and instead of granting his request, only chastised him in this short question: *Dost thou well to be angry?*

This mild check, however, did not make Jonah properly reflect on his unseemly carriage to his Divine Protector. He was still in hopes that his prophecy would be fulfilled, and therefore, leaving the city, he made himself a booth on the east side of it, where he resided in order to see what would become of the place he wished to be assigned to destruction. Soon after he had placed himself in this temporary habitation, the Almighty was pleased to cause a gourd § to spring up in one night, which, by the next morning, so covered this little hermitage, as to make it a most cool and agreeable retreat.

Jonah was exceeding glad of this unexpected, though seasonable, refreshment; but, alas, it proved very short, for God had prepared a worm, which eating into the root of the gourd, it soon withered, and left Jonah exposed to the violent heat of the sun. To add to this there arose a strong and hot easterly wind, which made Jonah so faint, and increased his discontented humour to such a degree, that he a second time earnestly besought of God that he might die.

Notwithstanding Jonah's great impatience, and his strong solicitation for death, the Almighty was pleased still to preserve him, and instead of complying with his second request of dying, asked him this question: *Dost thou well to be angry for the gourd?* To which Jonah replied, *I do well to be angry, even unto death.*

Though Jonah returned this short and peevish answer to God, yet, instead of expressing his displeasure, he was pleased to expostulate with him on his misconduct in words to this effect: "Consider (said he) Jonah what thou doest; thy own behaviour condemns thee. Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou didst not labour, neither madest it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night.

§ The Hebrew word Kikajon is, by the Septuagint, Arabic, and Syriac versions, translated *gourd*, but most of the ancient Greek translators, following St. Jerom in this particular, chuse rather to render it *ivy*. St. Jerom, however, acknowledges that the word *ivy* does not altogether answer the signification of the Hebrew word Kikajon, though he thinks it much better in this place than a gourd, which, growing close to the earth, could not have shaded Jonah

"And wouldst thou desire that I should have no concern or pity for that great city Nineveh, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left?"

What a beneficent and tender mode of arguing was this! and what a wretched picture have we in Jonah of the frailty of human nature! Jonah, though one of the chosen servants of God, would, with pleasure, have beheld a whole nation destroyed, rather than it should have been said, in after-times, that he had spoken a falsehood. Let us, therefore, learn from this, that our passions are our greatest enemies, and that the more humble we are, the more we shall be objects of the Divine favour.

Such and such only are the particulars related of the prophet Jonah. The Book so called is rather an History than a prophecy; and if it was written by himself, it is a frank acknowledgment of his own faults and failings. It contains likewise remarkable instances of God's compassion and condescension to him, as also a noble type of Our Saviour's burial and resurrection.

With respect to the whole of the Book of Jonah (which makes only four short chapters) as an historical subject, it is rather imperfect, both beginning and ending with the greatest abruptness. It begins with a conjunction copulative, *And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah*, from whence some commentators have thought it only an Appendix to some of his other writings; and it ends without giving us any manner of Account, either what became of the Ninevites, or of Jonah himself, after this expedition. It is certain, from the compassionate expression which God was pleased to use towards the Ninevites, that (for that time at least) he reversed the judgment he had denounced against them; and it is not improbable to think, that when Jonah had executed his commission, and was afterwards satisfied with the merciful proceedings of God, he returned into Judea. The Author of the Lives and Deaths of the Prophets (who goes under the name of Epipharnies) tells us, that returning from Nineveh, and being ashamed to be seen on account of his prediction not having been fulfilled, he retired with his mother to the plain of Sear, where he lived in a state of obscurity the remainder of his days.

from the heat of the sun, According to him the Kikajon is a shrub, which grows in the sandy places of Palestine, and increases so fast, that, in a few days, it rises to a considerable height. It is supported by its trunk without being upheld by any thing else; and by the thickness of its leaves, which resembles those of a vine, affords, in hot weather, a very agreeable shade.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



***JONAH.** sheltered by a **GOURD**
while waiting to behold the Fate of the City of Nineveh.*

C H A P. VII.

Uzziah, king of Judah, begins his reign piously, and proves victorious over his enemies: He conquers the Philistines and Arabians, and having subdued the Ammonites makes them become his tributaries. He repairs the walls of Jerusalem, and adds several new fortifications to them. He usurps the sacerdotal office, for which he is struck with a severe leprosy: He languishes under his disorder for some years, and then dies, leaving the throne to his son Jotham: Some account of the prophets Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, and Isaiah.

AFTER the murder of Amaziah, king of Judah, at Lachish, his son Uzziah (who is likewise called Azariah) succeeded to the throne in the twenty-seventh year of the reign of Jeroboam II. king of Israel. Uzziah was only sixteen years of age when he took upon himself the government of Judah, notwithstanding which he acted with the greatest discretion. He was careful, active, valiant, courteous, just and pious, for which God prospered him in all his undertakings, and blessed his arms with the most distinguished success.

The first attack he made was against his enemies the Philistines, whom he worsted in several battles, dismantled many of their principal towns, and built cities in different parts of the surrounding country to keep them under proper subjection.

His next expedition was against the Arabians situated on the borders of Egypt. These he soon reduced, as he did also the Me hunims, a people who lived in the desert part of the country. He next went against the Ammonites, who were so terrified, that they, as well as the others, whom he had subdued, became his tributaries.

Uzziah, having thus conquered his enemies, next directed his attention towards Jerusalem, the capital of his dominions. He rebuilt the ruined walls, and repaired that breach which had been made by Joash king of Israel, when he entered the city with his army, after making Amaziah his prisoner. He built one tower of an hundred and fifty cubits high, besides several others in different parts of the walls; and erected castles and forts for the protection of the country. He also constructed aqueducts, cisterns

and basons for the convenience of his cattle, of which he had immense numbers, the lands about him being chiefly pasturage. As he was a great lover of husbandry, he employed great numbers of ploughmen and planters in the plains, as also vine-dressers on the mountains, by means of which, together with the profits arising from his cattle, he obtained considerable possessions.

But the chief glory of his kingdom lay in his military force, which consisted of three hundred and seventy thousand select men, under the command of two thousand six hundred brave and experienced officers, who had been trained up in the most perfect knowledge of martial discipline. The men were all furnished with swords bucklers, spears, helmets, bows, slings, and other warlike weapons. As a farther security for the safety of the city against any bold invader, he erected battering machines in several of the towers on the walls, as likewise machines for throwing darts and stones, with hooks and other offensive weapons, so that the city was in a much greater state of security than it had ever hitherto been.

Uzziah continued to possess uninterrupted felicity, and to be prosperous in all his undertakings, during the life of Zechariah*; but when once that good and faithful counsellor died (which was in the thirty-third year of his reign) he grew so intoxicated with the thoughts of his power and greatness, that, forgetting himself, he neglected the more important duties of his worship to God; herein following the example of his father, who was unable to enjoy a course of prosperity with proper moderation.

On a certain day, which was fixed for a solemn festival,

|| This is the first time we read of any machine either for besieging or defending towns, which is plainly the reason why sieges were of so long a continuance before these were invented. Homer, who is the most antient Greek writer we know of who treats of sieges, describes a kind of entrenchment, (though a poor one) some lines of circumvallation, and a ditch with palisades; but we do not hear a word of any machines, such as the ballistæ and catapultæ, which were used for the hurling of stones, and throwing of darts. Sardanapalus, king of Assyria, maintained himself in Nineveh for seven years, because the besiegers (as Diodorus Siculus observe) wanted such engines as were fit for demolishing and taking of cities, they not being then invented. Now it is said of Uzziah, that he made in Jerusalem engines invented by cunning men, to be on the towers, and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones; so that it must certainly be a mistake to attribute the invention of the ballistæ, the scorpio, or the onagar, to the Greeks or Romans, because we

find them made use of in the east long before the Greeks had brought the military art to any great perfection. Uzziah was certainly the first inventor of them; and therefore it is said, that for these and other warlike preparations his name was spread abroad. From this time they began to be employed both in attacking and defending towns; and therefore we find the prophet Ezekiel, in describing the future sieges of Jerusalem and Tyre, makes mention of battering rams and engines of war, which, in all probability, were what later ages called their ballistæ and catapultæ.

* It is not unlikely to suppose that this person was the son of that Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, who, by the command of Jehoash, king of Judah, was slain in the temple; that he was called after his father's name, was preceptor to Uzziah, and, though not a prophet, yet a man very skillful in expounding the antient prophecies, and giving such instructions from them, as were necessary for the improvement and benefit of youth.

festival, Uzziah, having clothed himself in the dress of a priest, went to the temple to offer incense on the golden altar. Intimation of this being given to Azariah the high-priest, he, accompanied by eighty other priests, immediately repaired to the temple, and protested against such an assumption of the sacerdotal rights, which had ever been the peculiar privilege of the priests of the house of Aaron. Azariah enjoined him to desist from such profanity, saying, *It appertaineth not unto thee Uzziah to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed, neither shall it be for thine honour from the Lord God.*

This remonstrance had not the least effect on Uzziah, who, instead of paying any attention to it, fell into a violent passion, and treated the high-priest with the greatest indignity. God, however, was pleased to vindicate the sacredness of the sacerdotal office; for the very moment the king took the censer in his hand, and was going to burn incense, he was struck with a leprosy, upon which, fearful lest the Divine vengeance should punish him with death, he immediately left the temple, and hastened to his palace.

The disease with which God was pleased to afflict Uzziah for his presumption was of so malignant a nature as to be beyond the art of man to cure; the consequence of which was that his son Jotham (as his father's viceroy) took upon himself the administration of public affairs, while Uzziah was obliged to quit the palace, and, as was the case with all lepers, to live in a private place detached from the city.

Thus did Uzziah, after having reigned thirty-three years with an éclat not inferior to any of his predecessors, become reduced to a state of the most abject distress, and in which he continued during the remainder of his life. After having reigned in the whole fifty-two years, nineteen of which he laboured under the dreadful calamity inflicted on him for his presumption, he paid the debt of nature, in the 68th year of his age. As he was a leper his body was not interred in the royal sepulchres, but in the same field at some distance from them.

During the reign of Uzziah, king of Judah, there happened some events mentioned in other parts of Scripture, which are not to be found in the books that are purely historical. Such are, the terrible earthquake, whereof Amos prophesied two years before it happened; the dreadful plague of the locusts, of which the prophet Joel gives a very full and lively description; and that extreme drought, attended with the most alarming flashes of fire which fell from heaven, and (as the prophet expresses it) *devoured all the pastures of the wilderness, and burnt up all the trees of the field.*

But what more particularly engages our attention here is, the succession of prophets both in Israel and Judah, whom God was pleased to raise up to give the people instructions and exhortations, and to denounce his threatnings and judgments against them, on their persisting in their impieties. These he appointed not only

to warn them by word of mouth (as his former prophets had done) but to commit their admonitions to writing, that posterity might see the ingratitude of his people, and all other nations, from their backslidings and punishments, might avoid the enormities into which their predecessors had fallen, and for which they had so justly incurred the Divine wrath.

The first of the prophets who distinguished themselves by Divine direction, during this period, was Hosea, the son of Beerī, who, according to the introduction to his book, prophesied in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam II. king of Israel; so that he must have continued to be a prophet at least seventy years. In the book called Hosea, which contains the writings of that prophet, he begins with giving an exact description, and severe prophetic reproof, of the wicked and corrupt state of the whole kingdom of Israel, and particularly of the infamous idolatry which was in vogue among them, in worshipping the golden calves, which, in the reign of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, were set up at Dan and Bethel by Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, their first king, under whom they separated themselves from Judah, and the pure worship of God. He then very pathetically exhorts them to a serious and early repentance, but finding them still to continue in their impieties, from the kings and princes, even to the least and meanest of the people, he at length denounces to them the total destruction and overthrow of their state and kingdom; that they should be transported out of their own country, and carried captives into Assyria, where they should continue under a long and deplorable dispersion among strange and idolatrous nations. He likewise foretels, that the kingdom of Judah should, for some time, subsist after that of Israel, but that, at length, they likewise should be carried away captive beyond the Euphrates. Through the whole he lays open the sins, and declares the judgments of God against a people hardened and irreclaimable; but concludes with some consolation to the faithful and penitent, promising them comfort and support through the favour and grace of God in their heavenly king the Messiah that was to come, to whom, in due time, all the elect should be converted and gathered, in order to be eternally blessed in and through him.

The next prophet is Joel, the son of Pethuel. He mentions the same judgment that Amos does; and, under the similitude of an enemy's army, represents those prodigious swarms of locusts, which, in his time, fell upon Judea, and occasioned great desolation. He calls and invites the people to repentance, and promises mercy and forgiveness to those who will listen to the call. He likewise gives a full and exact prophecy of the blessed and flourishing state the church should enjoy under the Messiah, whom he calls the *Teacher of Righteousness*; of the sending of the abundant and liberal Communication of the Holy Ghost to the Elect and Believers; of the preservation and protection of the Church in the last sad and calamitous times; of her continuance and condition here upon earth;

earth; of the just and severe judgments of God against all her enemies; and, last of all, of her eternal glorification and felicity in heaven.

The prophet Amos, who is the next in turn, lived in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and of Jeroboam II. king of Israel. He was a shepherd of Tekoah in the land of Judah, and after being called to the prophetic office, was particularly sent to the ten tribes, or kingdom of Israel, where, by the command of God, he, jointly with Hosea, discharged the function of a prophet. After having denounced to all the nations bordering upon Palestine the just judgments of God on account of their enmity and animosity against his people, he next proceeds to those of Judah, and after again to the ten tribes of Israel. To these in particular he foretels and denounces heavy judgments of God, and in very express terms declares to them the entire subversion of their state and kingdom by their enemies forces; their captivity and dispersion among strange and far distant nations, on account of the multiplicity and enormity of their sins, and their obstinacy against all the reproofs and censures of God, together with the many warnings and exhortations the other prophets gave them, in the name of God, to turn and repent. All which prophecies are backed and confirmed by several visions, and many descriptions of the power and Majesty of God. But among all these threats and denunciations, he promiseth that the penitent and faithful shall be saved, and that the kingdom of the Messiah shall be established for the good and eternal salvation of all his Elect, whether Jews or Gentiles.

The next prophet is Obadiah, who was contemporary with Hosea, Joel and Amos. He denounces God's judgments against the Edomites for the mischiefs they had done to Judah and Jerusalem, whom he promises that they should be victorious over these Edomites, and others their enemies; and, last of all, foretels their reformation and restoration, and that the kingdom of the Messiah should be set up by the bringing in of a great salvation.

The last prophet we have to mention who distinguished himself during this period, was Isaiah, the son of Amos. He is the principal of those called the Greater Prophets, not only in respect to the excellent matter of which he treats, but also for the admirable sublimity and elegance of his style. In the twelve first chapters of the Book of his prophecies he treats of several heads which particularly concern the Jews, whom he boldly censures and reproves, teaches excellently, exhorts seriously, and comforts pathetically. From the 13th chapter to the 29th he mentions those prophecies which regard foreign nations and people, who were enemies to the Jewish nation, as also some others relating to the ten tribes, who had divided themselves from Judah and Benjamin, denouncing very severe and heavy judgments against them. But among these are mingled very comfortable promises of the Grace and Mercy of God to those who repent, who should be made partakers of an heavenly kingdom to be established by the Messiah who was to come. From the 29th chapter to the 36th he prophesies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem by the

Babylonians, and of the Captivity, or transportation of the Jews out of their own country into Babylon; all which are intermixed with several excellent and comfortable passages concerning the transactions that would take place during the time of the Messiah being on earth. From the 36th to the 40th chapter is recorded the History of king Hezekiah, taken from 2 Kings xviii. and 2 Chron. xxxii. From the 40th to the 49th chapter, the prophet foretels the coming of Christ, and the spiritual deliverance of his church, figured by the deliverance of the Jews from their Babylonish Captivity by king Cyrus, as also their restoration and settlement in their own country. From the 49th chapter to the end of the Book are several very clear prophecies concerning the person and office of Christ and his kingdom, which should be extended throughout the world; of his passion, death and glorification; as also of the preaching of the Gospel, and the calling of the Gentiles, who were to be joined and incorporated with his people the Jews. All these things the prophet describes with so much clearness and undeniable evidence, that he seems rather to write an history of things past, than a prophecy of things to come. For this reason, some of the ancient fathers were of opinion, that Isaiah might, with equal propriety, be called an Evangelist as a prophet, because in many places he speaks as clearly concerning the person, office, and miracles of Christ many hundred years before his incarnation, as the Apostles and Doctors of the New Testament have done since.

It is generally supposed that Amos, the father of Isaiah, was brother to Uzziah king of Judah, so that this prophet, with respect to his descent, was an illustrious person, as being a prince of the blood; it having been the wisdom of Providence to call persons of all sorts of conditions to the prophetic office, as well those of the highest, as the lowest quality.

According to the first verse of the first chapter of the Book of Isaiah, it appears that the time he prophesied was in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. And if we compute the years of the reign of these four kings, we must conclude, that Isaiah prophesied at least forty-five or fifty years, beginning with the last year of Uzziah, and ending with the fourteenth of Hezekiah; so that he must have consequently lived to a very great age.

Soon after he was appointed to the prophetic office he had many singular visions, the most remarkable among which was the following: God appeared to him in his majesty, and (to use the words of St. John the Evangelist) *he saw the glory of God, who sat upon a high throne surrounded by seraphims*, who, in consort repeated the following words: *Holy! Holy! Holy! in the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory.*

Isaiah, at this clear and full view of the Divine Majesty, abased himself with the deepest humility, acknowledging that he was a man of impure lips, and therefore unfit either to see himself, or to declare to others the great things God had vouchsafed to shew unto him. While he was thus complaining of his own unworthi-

ness, one of the seraphims that was about the throne took a live coal from the altar, flew to Isaiah, and touched his lips therewith, assuring him, that his iniquity was taken away, and his sins were purged from him.

As soon as Isaiah had received this assurance from the Angel, he felt the effect of the Divine fire, and found himself enabled to preach and declare to the people whatever it should please God to charge him with. He therefore pointed out to all those designed for the sacerdotal order how great a purity they ought to be endued with before they engaged themselves in that sacred function, and how earnestly they ought to beg of God, that he would be pleased to send down from heaven not only a live coal, as he did to him, but (as St. Bernard saith) *a whole fire, to refine them, and make them as pure as they ought to be.*

According to the tradition of the Jews, and fathers of the church, Isaiah lived till he was near an hundred years of age, when, during the persecution raised by Manasseh, king of Judah, that prince ordered him to be sawn asunder with a wooden saw, that he might take away his life by the most violent pains that could be invented.

The Author of the Book of Ecclesiasticus speaks in commendation of this holy prophet in words to this effect: "Hezekiah did the things

"that pleased the Lord, and was strengthened
"in the ways of David as Isaiah had com-
"manded him, who was a great prophet, and
"faithful in his vision. In his days the sun went
"backward, and he lengthened the king's life.
"He saw, (by an excellent gift of the Spirit)
"what should come to pass at the last, and he
"comforted those that mourned in Zion: he
"shewed what should come to pass for ever, till
"the end of time, and secret things before ever
"they happened."

But there is no need to add more testimonies in praise of this holy prophet. Those who read his prophecies as they ought will find the testimony of the Spirit of God proclaiming him a great and true prophet indeed, and confirming the truth of his prophecies by the most incontestable evidence and demonstration. In short, the whole Book is highly serviceable to the church of God, in all ages, for conviction of sin, direction in duty, and consolation in trouble; and its author may be justly accounted a great prophet, whether we consider the extent and variety of his predictions; the sublimity of the truths which he reveals; the majesty and elegance of his style; the loftiness of his metaphors, or the liveliness of his descriptions.—But we shall have occasion to say more of this prophet in the succeeding part of our History.

C H A P. VIII.

Zachariah is made king of Israel, after the throne had been vacant twenty-two years. He is murdered by Shallum, who usurps the throne. Shallum is put to death by Menahem, the general of the forces, who succeeds him in the government. Menahem, after reigning ten years, dies, and is succeeded by his son Pekahiah. This prince is murdered by Pekah, the general of his forces, who usurps the government, and after a reign of twenty years, is murdered by Hoshea, who succeeds him, and under whose government the Israelitish kingdom is destroyed by Salmanser, king of Assyria. The Story of Tobit and Tobias.

THE inter-regnum, or vacancy in the throne of Israel, which lasted upwards of twenty-two years, occasioned such a general confusion among the people, that at length they came to a resolution of placing Zachariah, the son of Jeroboam II. and the last of Jehu's line †, upon the throne. This happened in the thirty-eighth year of Uzziah, king of Judah; but as he proved a wicked prince, and followed the steps of his ancestors, he did not live long to enjoy the government; for, at the expiration of six months, he was murdered by Shallum, the son of Jabeish, who usurped the throne.

Shallum's government was much shorter than

that of his predecessor, he being on the throne only one month. At the time of his murdering Zachariah, Menahem the general of the king's forces, was besieging Tirzah ‡; but as soon as he heard what had happened, he immediately raised the siege, and marching directly to Samaria, defeated and slew Shallum, after which, having great interest and authority not only with the army, but the heads of the people, he was placed on the throne.

Menahem, having thus secured possession of the government, returned with his army to Tirzah, in order to renew the siege, and reduce the inhabitants to subjection. Elated with his preferment,

† Zachariah was the fourth king from Jehu, and the last of his race; in whom was fulfilled that gracious promise God was pleased to make to Jehu, as a reward for his courage and zeal in executing the judgment which God had commanded him to do on the house of Ahab, viz. that he and his family should sit on the throne of Israel unto the fourth generation, which was about 100 years, the last of the family being this king Zachariah, the son of Jeroboam II.

‡ Tirzah was a long time the regal city of the kingdom of Israel. Jeroboam, who was the first king, though he dwelt for some time at Shechem, in his latter days at least resided here; as did all the kings of Israel till Omri, having reigned six years in Tirzah, built Samaria, and removed the royal seat thither, where it continued till a final period was put to the Israelitish kingdom.

preferment, and naturally fired with ambition; he peremptorily demanded the gates of the city to be immediately thrown open; which orders not being obeyed; he took the place by storm; and having plundered it; marched to Tiphshah, laying waste the whole country between the two places. On his demanding the inhabitants of Tiphshah to open the gates of the city; they likewise refused, upon which, after making himself master of the place; he put all to the sword; without distinction either of age or sex; and, in short, such was his barbarity and cruelty, that even women with child did not escape his unbounded resentment.

For some time during the reign of this prince, the kingdom of Israel was torn with terrible convulsions; rapine, murder, and all manner of violence, especially superstition and idolatry, prevailing throughout the land; and though they were often admonished, reprov'd, and threatened by the prophets; yet they would not desist from their evil ways; but, on the contrary, bid defiance to every civil and moral obligation.

This perverseness and wickedness of the Israelites so highly offended God, that he was pleased to punish them by means of Pul, king of Assyria, who, taking advantage of the universal distractions among the people; marched with an army, and invaded the kingdom of Israel on that side of the river Jordan which lay nearest to Babylon. As soon as Menahem found himself thus powerfully attacked, he, by a present of a thousand talents of silver, (which he raised from the wealthiest of his subjects) prevailed with him not only to withdraw his forces, but likewise, before he left the kingdom, to recognize his title to the crown of Israel. This was one great reason why Menahem held the government in peace and quietness for the space of ten years, at the expiration of which, and in the fiftieth year of Uzziah, king of Judah, he paid the debt of nature, and was succeeded on the throne by his son Pekahiah.

The reign of Pekahiah, however, was but very short, for after he had been on the throne about two years, Pekah, the general of his army, conspired against him, and having slain him in the tower of the royal palace, usurped the government.

Pekah sat on the throne of Israel twenty years, but his reign was attended with many difficulties

and perplexities; and he was at length divested of his life in the same manner he had taken away that of his predecessor. Tiglath-Pileser, the then king of Assyria, invaded his dominions several times; took many of his principal cities; ravaged the country; and carried away great numbers of his subjects captives. At length Hoshea, the son of Elah, taking advantage of Pekah's confusion and distress, found means to murder him, and afterwards obtained possession of the throne of Israel §.

It was not long before Hoshea found that his usurpation of the government was attended with many incumbrances; for he, imitating his wicked predecessors, and, together with the people, continuing in disobedience and rebellion against the Lord; and slighting the admonitions and threatenings of the prophets, they at length so highly provoked God that he deserted them, and suffered the king of Assyria sorely to afflict them.

Shalmaneser, the then Assyrian monarch, (who succeeded his father Tiglath-Pileser in the fourteenth year of Ahaz king of Judah) invaded the Israelitish dominions with a very considerable army, and after ravaging several capital places, at length laid siege to Samaria, which having subdued, he made Hoshea promise to become his vassal, and to pay him an annual tribute so long as he remained on the throne of Israel.

Hoshea, for some time, sent his presents and his tribute money with very great punctuality; but at length, having entered into a confederacy with So, king of Egypt, he flattered himself with being able, by his assistance, to shake off the Assyrian yoke, and therefore withdrew his subjection, by refusing to pay the tribute, as he had been accustomed to do for more than seven years.

In consequence of this remissness Shalmaneser, who was a stranger to the cause of it, marched with a very large army against Hoshea, and having subdued all the surrounding country, and amassed prodigious wealth*, he advanced to Samaria, and immediately laid siege to the place. Such was the strength of the fortifications, and such the resolution of Hoshea, that the inhabitants held out more than three years, but at length were compelled to surrender, which was in the ninth and last year of Hoshea's reign.

Shalmaneser, having made himself compleat master

§ After Hoshea had murdered his predecessor Pekah, the elders of the land seem to have taken the government into their own hands, for he had not the possession of the kingdom till the latter end of the 12th year of Ahaz; i. e. nine years after he had committed the fact. He came to the crown it must be owned in a very wicked manner, and yet his character in scripture is not so vile as that of many of his predecessors; 2 Kings xvii. 2. For whereas the kings of Israel had hitherto maintained guards upon the frontiers, to hinder their subjects from going to Jerusalem to worship, Hoshea took away these guards, and gave free liberty to all to go and pay their adoration where the law had directed; and therefore, when Hezekiah had invited all Israel to come to his passover, this prince permitted all that would to go, and when upon their return from that festival, they destroyed all the monuments of idolatry that were found in the kingdom of Samaria, instead of forbidding them, in all probability

he gave his consent to it; because without some tacit encouragement at least, they durst not have ventured to do it.

|| This So, with whom Hoshea entered into confederacy; is, in profane authors, called Sabacon; that famous Ethiopian mentioned by Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus, who, in the beginning of Hezekiah's reign, invaded Egypt, and having taken Boccharis, the king thereof, prisoner, had him, in great cruelty, burnt alive, and then seized on his kingdom.

* Among other rich things which Shalmaneser took and carried away in this expedition, was the golden calf which Jeroboam had set up at Bethel, and which, ever since his time, had been worshipped by the ten tribes that had revolted with him from the house of David, as the other golden calf, which he set up at the same time at Dan, had been taken from thence about ten years before by Tiglath-pileser, when he invaded Galilee, the province wherein that city stood.

master of Samaria, punished Hoshea with great severity, by ordering him to be immediately put in chains, conducted to prison, and there kept in close confinement during the remainder of his life. The inhabitants not only of Samaria, but also of the principal places in the Israelitish dominions, he made captives, carrying them away, and placing them in the northern parts of Assyria, and in the cities of the Medes. Such was the wretched fate of a people, who disdained subjection to the laws, and despised the admonitions of the prophets, who repeatedly forewarned them that a continued course of impiety would certainly end in their destruction.

In order to supply the place of the Israelites in the land of Samaria, Shalmaneser sent several colonies of his own subjects from Babylon and other places, to inhabit the principal parts of the country. But these being too few for the purpose, and withal a very wicked and idolatrous people, the Divine Providence permitted lions, and other wild beasts to multiply upon them to such a degree, that they were forced to make a representation thereof to the Assyrian court, which they did in words to this effect: "That, being ignorant of the manner wherein they were to worship the God of the country, they supposed that this affliction was sent upon them; and therefore they humbly prayed, that some priests of the Jewish nation might be sent to instruct them in that particular." This request was immediately complied with: but as these colonies consisted of a mixture of different nations and provinces, they joined the worship of the true God with that of the several idols of the countries from whence they came, so that the whole was a medley of different religions, some of which, as practised by the colonists, were of the most strange and unaccountable nature.

Such was the end of the Israelitish kingdom, after it had subsisted above two hundred and fifty-six years; and such was the beginning of that mixture of people, who afterwards went under the name of Samaritans.

Among the captive Israelites who were carried away by Shalmaneser was one Tobit †, a man of the tribe and city of Naphthali. He had

served God from his youth, and in the course of his life distinguished himself by such acts as most tended to the benefit of his fellow-creatures. He married one Anna, a woman of his own tribe, by whom he had a son named Tobias, or Tobit, who, being naturally of a good disposition, led a very pious and religious life.

This little family, during their captivity, continued, in the strictest manner they were able, to serve their God: they would not eat of the food of the heathens, but lived after the manner of the Jews. The piety of Tobit was so conspicuous, and his whole conduct so meritorious, that he was at length taken notice of by Shalmaneser, who, confiding in his integrity, made him his purveyor, and at the same time gave him permission to go whither he pleased.

Tobit made a pious use of this indulgence, by taking every opportunity he could of visiting and relieving his distressed countrymen. He went one day to Rages, a city of the Medes, having with him ten talents of silver which the king had bestowed on him; and finding one Gabael, of his own tribe, very poor, and in great distress, he lent him the ten talents of silver, at the same time taking his promise for the repayment of the money.

A short time after this Shalmaneser died, and was succeeded by his son Sennacherib, who was a very cruel prince, and persecuted the poor Israelites with the greatest severity. But this did not intimidate the good and pious Tobit, who still continued to do all the services for his countrymen that lay in his power: he went daily to visit, and distribute among them whatever he could obtain for their relief: in short, he fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and buried those who died, or were slain by order of the king.

Sennacherib had been some time in the land of Judea, when it pleased God to send among his soldiers a most dreadful plague, which in a short time carried off great numbers. In consequence of this Sennacherib left the country, and returning home full of rage against the Israelites, he ordered many of them to be put to death. The good Tobit was greatly afflicted for the distresses of his countrymen, and as the last thing he could do for those who had fallen victims to the king's cruelty, he decently interred their remains.

† Though the Book of Tobit, from whence this story is taken, was not admitted by the Jews among their canonical books of scripture, nor received as canonical till the Council of Trent passed an order for that purpose, yet it has been allowed, not only by the Jews, but likewise the generality of Christian Fathers, to be a true history of this particular family, an admirable example of charity and beneficence, and an excellent pattern of paternal care and filial obedience. The Book itself is supposed to have been written, the former part by Tobit himself, and the latter by his son; at least it is thought that they left behind them memoirs of their family, and such materials, as a later author, who lived very likely either in, or after the captivity, might compile, and digest into proper order. It is not doubted, but that the original of this book was either in Hebrew or Chaldee. St. Jerome, having met with a Chaldee copy of it, did not question but that he had got the original, and, accordingly, employed a man, who was perfectly well skilled in that language, to render it into Hebrew, whilst himself translated it into Latin; and this is the version that the church of Rome chiefly esteems. Before this version, there was another (which is reckoned the most antient) done into Greek; but who the author of it

was, or from what language he translated it, we have but small foundation for conjecture; though some have been apt to think, that it came from the same fountain from whence St. Jerome had his, but that the translator had taken such freedoms with the text, as obliged him to re-translate it. The Latin translation, which was in use before St. Jerome's appeared, seems to have been taken from the Greek, though in many places it varies from it, by abridging sometimes, and sometimes amplying the narration. The Hebrew copies, published by Fagius and Munster, are nothing but translations (and those very modern ones) from the Greek or Latin versions, though, in many places of the book, they take the freedom to vary from them. That of Munster is supposed to have been done by himself, and that of Fagius by the Jews of Constantinople, in the year 1517, and has so near a conformity to the Greek, that no doubt can be made of its being descended from thence. These are the several versions that we have of this Book of Tobit, which, as it was not received into the Canon of the Jews, was not therefore admitted into that of the antient Christian authors, who confined themselves to those books only, which the Jews allowed to be canonical.

mains. The king being informed of this ordered Tobit to be put to death, and all his possessions to be seized; but Tobit, having luckily got notice of these orders, immediately fled; and as he had been a friend to many in distress, so he did not now want a friend to conceal him from the malice and resentment of the king.

About two months after the flight of Tobit, the king was murdered by his two sons, upon which Tobit returned to his house; and, through the interest of Achiacharus, his nephew, who was cup-bearer to Sarchedonus, the successor of Sennacherib, all his goods and possessions were restored to him. The danger he had been in during the life of the late king did not deter him from still continuing to bury the dead; upon which some of his neighbours mocked and reviled him, saying, *This man is not yet afraid to be put to death for this matter: who fled away; and yet, lo, he burieth the dead again.*

Tobit, having one day greatly fatigued himself in the charitable office of burying the dead, laid himself down to rest under a wall. While he was asleep there fell from a sparrow's nest some hot dung on his face, some of which getting into his eyes, there came a whiteness over them which obscured his sight. He immediately applied to the physicians for relief, but they were unable to do him any service, and he continued for some time totally blind. This affliction he bore with great patience, but it reduced him to such distress, that his wife was obliged to work for the support of the family.

Tobit, thinking he had not long to live, gave his son many excellent instructions relative to his future conduct in life; having done which he ordered him to go to Rages, to recover the ten talents he had lent Gabael. Young Tobias expressed his unwillingness to undertake the journey alone; upon which his father bade him look out for some civil person to bear him company, and he would amply requite him for his trouble.

While young Tobias was in search of a proper person to accompany him on this business, the angel Raphael appeared to him in the shape of a young Israelite, and offered to conduct him to Gabael at Rages, at whose house he said he had been, calling himself Azariah, the son of Ananias. Pleased with the figure of the person who offered these services, young Tobias went with him to his father, who, after some enquiries who he was, and what reward he would have for his trouble, agreed he should accompany his son, and the necessary preparations being made on

the part of Tobias, they set out on their journey.

On the evening of the first day they stopped at a house near the banks of the river Tigris †, and Tobias, being fatigued with walking, went to the water to wash his feet, accompanied by the angel Raphael. When he came to the river he saw a fish coming out of the water, which was of so prodigious a size that he was fearful it would devour him. The angel, observing how much he was intimidated, bade him take courage, lay hold of the fish, and pull him upon the land. Tobias did as he was commanded, upon which the angel bade him take out the entrails, and carefully preserve the heart, gall and liver, assigning for a reason, that the heart and liver being burnt on coals, the smoke arising from them would drive away evil spirits, and that the gall was an excellent remedy for removing imperfections in the sight. They then dressed a part of the fish, and, after having properly refreshed themselves, proceeded on their journey to Rages.

When they came near Ecbatane §, a city of Medea, the angel told Tobias there was a man in that city called Raguel, who was of the same tribe with him, and a near kinsman; and that he had an only daughter named Sara: that they would go and lodge at his house, and that he should ask of him his daughter in marriage. Tobias told him he was informed that she had already been married to seven husbands, who were all dead and that the evil spirit had killed them on the very night of their marriage. That he feared the same fate would befall him, and being an only son his death would cause such great affliction to his aged parents that it would hasten their end. The angel answered, that the persons over whom the evil spirit had power were such as married without the fear of God, and only thought of satisfying their brutal appetites: that to prevent the like misfortunes which had befallen the others, when he married the young woman he should strictly observe continence for the first night, and spend the greater part of his time in prayer to God. That he should lay the liver of the fish on the fire, and it would drive away the evil spirit; and that after the first night was passed he should take the young woman in the fear of the Lord, and for the sake of having children.

When Tobias and the angel Raphael arrived at the house of Raguel, he received them with great respect, and entertained them in the best manner his house would afford; from which treatment

† The river Tigris was not much celebrated in antient times, but it is well known to those who have, of late years, visited our East India settlements. It rises in the Armenian mountains, and received its name from its rapidity, the word Tigris, in the Medean language, signifying a dart or arrow. It passes through the lake Arethusa, and afterwards sinking into the earth, rises again on the other side of Mount Taurus: that it is the same river hath been evinced by a variety of experiments, for things thrown in on one side have been brought up on the other. It proceeds from Mount Taurus to the lake Thespiates, but often sinks under ground by the way, particularly in one place, where it hides itself for the space of twenty-five miles, and then breaking up to the surface of the earth, it proceeds with great rapidity. Be-

tween Assyria and Mesopotamia, it receives several rivers into its bosom; and below Bagdat, it branches into two channels, which both disembogue themselves into the Euphrates, and by that means form an island.

§ The city of Ecbatane was one of the most antient of which we have any accounts in history, for it was built by Dejoces, the first king of Medea, several centuries before the Jews were led into captivity. Before that period the Medes, like the Celtes of old, lived in woods, dens and caves; but this wise prince, having collected them together, and built this city, made it the seat of his regal dignity. It was finely situated on an eminence, from which there was the most extensive prospect of fields, woods, rivers and vineyards.

treatment Tobias was encouraged to do as the angel had directed, namely, to ask of Raguel his daughter Sara in marriage. The old man at first hesitated to comply with his request, fearing lest the same mischief should fall on him which had happened to the other seven that had married her; but the angel bidding him not fear, he called his daughter, and taking her by the hand, presented her to Tobias, saying, *Behold, here she is, take her after the law of Moses, and lead her away to thy father.*

Tobias punctually performed what the angel had enjoined with respect to his conduct to his wife on the first night after marriage. He roasted the liver of the fish, on the coals, and spent the whole night in continence and prayer, addressing himself to God in these words: "Blessed art thou, O God of our fathers, and blessed is thy holy and glorious name for ever; let the heavens bless thee and all thy creatures. Thou madest Adam, and gavest him Eve his wife for an helper and stay: of them came mankind: Thou hast said, It is not good that man should be alone; let us make unto him an aid like unto himself. And now, O Lord, I take not this my sister for lust, but uprightly: therefore mercifully ordain that we may become aged together."

Raguel, who expected the same fate would attend Tobias as the other seven who had been married to his daughter, arose early in the morning, went out, and dug a grave in order to inter the body as soon as possible. On his return he desired his wife to send one of the maids to see if Tobias was alive. The girl, on entering the room, found them both in bed, and asleep, of which giving her master notice, he first praised God, and then ordered one of his servants to go and fill up the grave.

This unexpected event gave such satisfaction to Raguel, that he made a most sumptuous entertainment on the occasion, and conjured his son-in-law Tobias to stay with him a fortnight, after which he would give him half his possessions, and he should return in safety to his father. Tobias complied with Raguel's request, but that he might not seem to neglect the business on which his father had sent him, he entreated the angel, whom he still took to be Azariah, to go to Rages, in order to receive the money of Gabael, which he was indebted to his father. The angel did as Tobias desired, and having settled with Gabael, and told him all that had passed relative to Tobias's marriage, he took him with him to Ecbarane, in order to participate of the nuptial feast.

In the mean time old Tobit and his wife were in the greatest anxiety of mind on account of the long absence of their son. The mother, indeed, was inconsolable, saying, *My son is dead, seeing he stayeth so long: Now I care for nothing, my son, since I have let thee go, the light of mine eyes.* But old Tobit used all the arguments he could to remove her apprehensions, and pacify her, saying, *Hold thy peace, take no care, for he is safe.*

The fourteen days of the marriage feast being expired, young Tobias requested of his father-in-law, that he might take his leave and return home, as his parents would consequently be very uneasy at his long absence. Raguel readily con-

sented to this request, and gave him, as he had promised, one half of his possessions with his daughter; having done which he blessed them, and said, *My children, the God of heaven give you a prosperous journey.* Then addressing himself to his daughter, he gave her this advice: *Honour thy father and thy mother-in-law, which are now thy parents, that I may hear good report of thee.* Edna, the wife of Raguel, then addressed Tobias as follows: *The Lord of heaven grant that I may see thy children of my daughter Sara before I die, that I may rejoice before the Lord: behold, I commit my daughter unto thee of special trust; wherefore do not intreat her evil.*

Tobias, having taken leave of his father-in-law, set out on his journey home, accompanied by the angel, his wife, and several servants, taking with him many cattle and camels, with other articles, which Raguel had given him as a marriage portion with his daughter. When they came within some distance of Nineveh, the angel and Tobias went on before, in order to satisfy Tobias's parents, as soon as possible, of his safety, as also to make the necessary preparations for receiving the company that followed him. On their way the angel (having directed Tobias to take the fish's gall with him) told him that as soon as he should see his father to anoint his eyes with it: that as it would make them smart, he would consequently rub them with his hands, whereby the philm would come off, and his sight should be restored.

The mother of Tobias, being anxious for the return of her son, had gone some way from her house in expectation of seeing him: nor was it long before her wishes were gratified. As soon as she beheld him, she ran with eager joy back to her house, saying to her husband, *Behold, thy son cometh, and the man that went with him.* When Tobias arrived his mother embraced him with tears of joy, and then expressed her satisfaction in these words: *Seeing I have seen thee, my son, from henceforth I am content to die.* The old man, hearing his son's voice, arose to meet him at the door, in order to salute him, but being blind, he stumbled and could not proceed. Young Tobias, taking him by the hand, placed him in his seat, and immediately, agreeable to the direction of the angel, rubbed his eyes with the fish's gall, saying, *Be of good hope my father.* The gall making the old man's eyes smart, he rubbed them, upon which the philm, or whiteness came off, and he beheld his darling son Tobias. He immediately embraced him, and wept for joy, having done which he expressed his thankfulness to God for the recovery of his sight in these words: *Blessed (said he) art thou, O God, and blessed is thy name for ever; and blessed are all thine holy angels: for thou hast scourged, and hast taken pity on me: for, behold, I see my son Tobias.*

After these mutual embraces were over, Tobias related to his parents the particulars of all that had happened during his absence, and informed them that his wife, with her attendants, were near at hand. In consequence of this old Tobit accompanied his son to the gate of the city, in order to receive them, the people in their way expressing their astonishment at his having recovered his sight, of which he had been

been totally divested upwards of eight years.

As soon as Tobias's wife, with her attendants, arrived, Old Tobit received her with all the tenderness of a parent, saying, *Thou art welcome, daughter : God be blessed which hath brought thee unto us, and blessed be thy father and mother.* The whole company then proceeded to Tobit's house, where they celebrated the marriage with the greatest festivity and joy for seven days.

After their festivity was over on this occasion old Tobit recollected the obligation he lay under to Azariah, who had accompanied his son in his journey, and brought him safe back. He therefore told Tobias to reward him for his trouble, and to give him something more than what he had agreed to do. *My son, (said he) see that the man have his wages which went with thee, and thou must give him more.* Young Tobias replied, *O father, it is no harm to me to give him half of those things which I have brought : for he hath brought me again to thee, and made whole my wife, and brought me the money, and likewise healed thee.*

Tobias, calling the angel to him (whom he had all along taken for Azariah) offered him half of what he had brought with him from Ecbatane as a reward for his services. On this Raphael discovered himself to be a messenger from God, saying, *I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One.* So unexpected a declaration greatly alarmed both Tobit and his son, who immediately fell prostrate on the ground. The angel bade them arise, and fear not, for all things should go well with them. *It is not, said he, of any favour of mine, but by the will of God I came ; wherefore, praise him for ever. All these days I did appear unto you ; but I did neither eat nor drink, but ye did see a vision. Now therefore give God thanks, for I go up to him that sent me.* After the angel had said this, Tobit and his son arose, when, to their great astonishment, they no more beheld the person they had taken for Azariah, he having, between his address to them, and their rising from the ground, suddenly disappeared.

This singular incident struck a deep impression on the minds of both Tobit and his son, the former of whom wrote a most excellent prayer on the occasion, in which he expressed his thankfulness to God for the great benefits he had received at his hands, and strongly recommended it to others to fly to him for protection.

Tobit lived many years after this, during which time he principally employed himself in the same manner he had done previous to the loss of his sight, namely, doing all the good

that laid in his power towards relieving the distresses of his captive brethren. When he found his end approaching, he called to him his son Tobias, to whom, after giving him some excellent instructions relative to the future conduct of his life, he foretold the destruction both of Nineveh and Jerusalem, and advised him, after his and his mother's deaths, to retire with his family into Media. "Go, my son, said he, into Media, for I surely believe those things which Jonas the prophet spake of Nineveh ; that it shall be overthrown, and that for a time peace shall rather be in Media ; and that our brethren shall lie scattered in the earth from that good land ; and Jerusalem shall be desolate, and the house of God in it shall be burned, and shall be desolate for a time ; and that again God will have mercy on them, and bring them again into the land, where they shall build a temple, but not like to the first, until the time of that age be fulfilled ; and afterward they shall return from all places of their captivity, and build up Jerusalem gloriously, and the house of God shall be built in it for ever with a glorious building, as the prophets have spoken thereof. And all nations shall turn, and fear the Lord God truly, and shall bury their idols. So shall all nations praise the Lord, and his people shall confess God, and the Lord shall exalt his people ; and all those which love the Lord God in truth and justice shall rejoice, shewing mercy to our brethren. And now, my son, depart out of Nineveh, because that those things which the prophet Jonas spake shall surely come to pass."

Tobit having given this advice and these instructions to his son, soon after paid the debt of nature, at which time he was in the 185th year of his age.

Tobias strictly obeyed the injunctions of his dying father, for after the death of his mother he left Nineveh, and retired with his whole family to his father-in-law's at Ecbatane, whom he still found living in a very advanced age.

On the death of Raguel, Tobias inherited all his possessions, and, from his industry, became exceeding wealthy, so that at his death he left an ample provision for his family. He followed the steps of his father in doing acts of beneficence, not only to his countrymen, but to all others who laboured under distress ; and having thus spent his time he at length died in the 127th year of his age. A short time before his dissolution he heard of the destruction of Nineveh, which was taken by Nabuchodonosor : and before his death he rejoiced over Nineveh.

C H A P. IX.

Jotham, the son and successor of Uzziah, reigns prosperously over Judah for sixteen years, and then dies. He is succeeded by his son Abaz, who is a very wicked prince, and, instead of reforming the people, promotes idolatry. Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, invade his territories, and greatly perplex him. He makes a league with the king of Assyria, and becomes tributary to him. He orders the temple of Jerusalem to be shut up, suppresses the true worship of God, and supplies its place with the idolatrous worship of the Syrians. He dies, and, for his impieties, is refused interment in the royal sepulchres. He is succeeded by his son Hezekiah, who renews the passover, destroys idolatry, and restores the worship of the temple. His sickness and remarkable recovery. He forms an alliance with the king of Babylon. Makes a truce with Sennacherib, king of Assyria. Receives an haughty and threatening message from him, at which he is greatly alarmed, but is comforted by the prophet Isaiah, who assures him that no danger shall ensue. Sennacherib marches against Jerusalem with a design of totally destroying it, but is prevented by the Divine interposition, the greater part of his army being destroyed in one night by an angel. Death of Hezekiah.

WE have in the preceding chapters of this Book, related every particular circumstance that occurred from the first separation of the Israelites into two kingdoms, to the overthrow of the ten tribes, or that of Israel, by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria. Previous to, as well as for many years after, the latter incident, a variety of circumstances took place in the kingdom of Judah, the History of which we shall now resume from the death of Uzziah, and proceed regularly to relate every transaction that happened till the overthrow of that kingdom, and the captivity of the inhabitants, by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

On the death of Uzziah, king of Judah, his son Jotham succeeded to the throne, at which time he was twenty-five years of age, though, from his father's natural imperfections, he had the whole administration of affairs in his hands some years before. He was a prince remarkable for his excellent qualities and virtues; a man exemplary for his reverence to God, his justice to man, and his care for the commonwealth. He made it his business to set and keep things in order; to rectify whatever he found amiss; and, in matters of religion, would have made a thorough reformation, but his people were naturally so exceeding wicked, that they obstructed his designs. He took care, however, to repair the temple; to rebuild the high-gate which led from his palace, and, to secure himself against hostile incursions, raised several structures both in the mountains and forests, for the security and defence of his kingdom.

Thus did Jotham continue to dispose of his time for the benefit and security of his subjects for some years, during which peace and tranquillity were preserved throughout his dominions. But at length he was interrupted by the Ammonites, who had been formerly conquered by David, and made tributary to the crown of Judah. These people, having grown exceeding powerful, invaded his territories, and made de-

predations in various parts; upon which Jotham, marching against them with a considerable body of forces, soon drove them out of his country, and imposed a tribute on their king of an hundred talents of silver, ten thousand measures of wheat, and as many of barley, to be paid annually.

The Ammonites continued to pay this tribute to Jotham for three years, at the expiration of which Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, having entered into a confederacy against Judah, they took this opportunity of revolting; and Jotham had it never after in his power to reduce them to subjection.

Before the preparations for war on the parts of the two confederate kings Rezin and Pekah, took effect, Jotham paid the debt of nature, in the forty-first year of his age, and sixteenth of his reign. He was buried in the royal sepulchre of his ancestors, and his death was universally lamented by his subjects.

On the decease of Jotham, his son Ahaz (who was then about twenty years of age) succeeded to the throne. He was a very wicked prince, and, instead of following the maxims of his father, not only gave himself up to idolatry, but endeavoured to promote it among his subjects. But he was at first in some degree interrupted by the state of public affairs at his father's death, he greatly dreading the consequences that might arise from the preparations making by the conjunctive kings, Rezin and Pekah, against him.

The plan laid down by the confederate kings was, first to make themselves masters of Jerusalem, and then to extirpate the whole house of David, and set up a new king, of their appointment, on the throne of Judah. This plan, however, proved abortive. It was the will of Providence to punish Ahaz alone for his wickedness, and not to cut off the whole race of his servant David. He was therefore pleased to send to Ahaz the prophet Isaiah, to encourage him

him in making the most vigorous defence against the enemy, and to assure him that they should not succeed in their attempt. As a proof that what he said might be depended on, the prophet gave Ahaz two signs, one of which was to be accomplished speedily, and the other at some distance of time. The first of these was, that the son, which Isaiah then had, should not be of age to discern between good and evil before both the two kings Rezin and Pekah should be cut off from the land*. The other was, that a virgin should conceive, and bare a son, who should be called Immanuel†; so that he might rest himself satisfied, because the destruction of the House of David could in no case happen until the Messiah should be born, in this miraculous manner, of a virgin descended from that family.

The confederate kings, having made all necessary preparations, marched with a very formidable army into the kingdom of Judah, and after committing various depredations in different parts of the country, at length laid siege to Jerusalem. Ahaz, in consequence of the advice given him by the prophet Isaiah, used his utmost efforts to defeat their design of taking the place; and such was the strength of the city, and the unanimous resolution of the inhabitants, that the enemy, finding themselves not able to obtain a conquest so soon as they expected, raised the siege, and returned home.

Notwithstanding the manifest interposition of Providence in behalf of Ahaz, yet, to such a degree was he naturally prone to wickedness, that, instead of any ways reforming, he grew more wicked and obdurate in his sins. He not only promoted the worship of the golden calves (for which he had not the same politic reason the kings of Israel had) but made molten images likewise for all the idols of the heathens. To these he sacrificed, and burnt incense in the high-places, and on hills, and under every green tree; and, to add to all his other impieties, he made his son pass through the fire‡ in the valley of Hinnom§ according to the custom of the heathens, whom God had cast out to make room for the children of Israel.

These distinguished enormities were so highly offensive to God, that he was pleased to punish him by means of the two confederate kings Rezin and Pekah, who, the year following, marched into his country with the same considerable army they had under their command when they laid

siege to Jerusalem. They divided their troops into three parts, the first of which was placed under Rezin king of Syria, the second under Pekah king of Israel, and the third under Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim; so that they invaded the dominions of Ahaz in three different parts at the same time.

Rezin, king of Syria, possessed himself of Elath||, out of which he drove the Jews, placed the Edomites in their stead, and, having loaded his army with spoils, and taken a prodigious number of captives, returned in triumph to Damascus.

Pekah, king of Israel, marched with his army against Ahaz, and gave him so terrible an overthrow, that no less than one hundred and twenty thousand men were slain in the field of battle.

Zichri, taking advantage of this victory, marched with his army to Jerusalem, and, having made himself master of the city, slew Maafeiah, the king's son, together with several of the most principal people belonging to the court.

After these two defeats, the Israelitish armies, namely, the one under Pekah, and the other under Zichri, returned to Samaria, taking with them a prodigious quantity of spoil, with upwards of two hundred thousand prisoners whom they intended to have sold for slaves. But in this they were disappointed by means of the prophet Oded, who, on their approach near the city, went out to meet them, accompanied by a great number of the principal inhabitants. As soon as Oded came up with the two confederate kings, and saw the number of captives they had with them, he remonstrated with the two commanders Pekah and Zichri, on their cruelty to their brethren in these words: "Behold (said he) because the Lord God of your fathers was wrath with Judah, he hath delivered them into your hand, and ye have slain them in a rage that reacheth up unto heaven. And now ye propose to keep under the children of Judah and Jerusalem for bondmen and bondwomen unto you: but are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God? Now hear me, therefore, and deliver the captives again, which ye have taken captive of your brethren: for the fierce wrath of the Lord is upon you."

When Oded had finished his speech the principal men of the city who accompanied him, strengthened his remonstrance by addressing themselves to the two commanders in these words:

"Ye

* Isaiah viii. 4.

† Ibid. vii. 14.

‡ It is the opinion of all commentators, that this passing through the fire was performed either by causing the child to pass between two fires made near each other, by way of its consecration to the service of the idol Moloch, or by shutting up the child in the body of the idol, which was made of brass, in body like a man, but in head like an ox. It was so great in bulk, that the body was divided into seven distinct cells, into one of which the child to be sacrificed being put, was suffocated and burnt to death by the heat which was conveyed from a fire without. And that the shrieks of the child might not be heard, the priests beat drums, from whence the place was called *Tophet*, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies a *drum*.

§ Hinnom was, in all probability, the name of some eminent person in very antient times, to whom this valley

belonged, and to whose posterity it descended, from whence it is sometimes called *the Valley of the children of Hinnom*. It was a fine spot of ground situated on the east-side of Jerusalem, and so delightfully shaded with trees, that it invited the people to make it a place of idolatrous worship, whereby it in time became infamous, and was at last turned into a public dunghill for the reception of all kinds of filth brought from the city.

|| Elath, or Elah, was a famous port on the Red Sea, which David, in his conquest of the kingdom of Edom, took, and there established a great trade to various parts of the world. In the reign of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, the Edomites recovered their liberty, and became sole masters of this city, until the time that Uzziah recovered it to the dominions of Judah; but, in the reign of Ahaz, the Syrians retook it, and restored it to the Edomites.

"Ye shall not bring in the captives hither: for
 "whereas we have offended against the Lord
 "already, ye intend to add more to our sin and
 "to our trespass: for our trespass is great, and
 "there is fierce wrath against Israel."

Pekah and Zichri listened to these remonstrances with all due attention; they not only released the captives, but likewise cloathed and relieved them out of the spoils they had taken, after which they conducted them to Jericho, such as were not able to walk being carried on asses; from whence they returned at discretion to their respective habitations.

No sooner was the kingdom of Judah delivered from the severe oppression of the confederate kings Pekah and Rezin, than it was invaded by enemies from other parts, who treated the people with the greatest cruelty. The Edomites to the south, and the Philistines to the west, seized on all those parts of the country which lay contiguous to them, and, by ravages and inroads, committed the most violent depredations.

The affairs of Ahaz were in such a situation that he was unable to send a proper force to repel the incursions of his enemies. He therefore dispatched ambassadors to Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, with a considerable present, consisting of all the gold and silver he could find in the temple, together with assurances that, if he would but send forces to his assistance, he would ever after become his vassal.

The Assyrian monarch was so captivated with the bribe, and so well satisfied with the promises made by Ahaz, that he readily engaged in his interest; and, marching with a considerable army against Rezin king of Syria, slew him in battle. Having done this, he besieged and took Damascus*, after which he reduced the whole country under his dominion, transplanted the people to Kir, and so put an end to the kingdom of Syria, after it had continued nine or ten generations.

Having thus reduced the kingdom of Syria, the next step taken by Tiglath-pileser was, to march against Pekah, king of Israel, over whom he was so successful that he possessed himself of all the principal places in his dominions situated beyond the river Jordan. He then plundered the land of Galilee, and afterwards proceeded towards Jerusalem in order to get more money from Ahaz as a reward for his services. Such was his avarice, and such the weakness and pusillanimity of Ahaz, that he even melted down the vessels of the temple to satisfy him, after which he marched back to Damascus, and there wintered, without doing Ahaz any farther services.

These indignities, which another man might have resented, Ahaz, in his circumstances, thought proper to overlook; and not only so, but, when he heard that Tiglath-pileser was returned to Damascus, he went thither to pay him homage and obeisance, as his vassal and tributary.

While Ahaz continued at Damascus he happened to see an idolatrous altar, which, from its curious make, so attracted his fancy, that he ordered a model of it to be taken, and sent to Urijah the high-priest at Jerusalem, with orders to have another made as like it as possible. Urijah indiscreetly obeyed the king's injunction; upon which Ahaz, immediately on his return home, removed the Altar of the Lord from the temple, and not only ordered the new one to be placed in its stead, but, for the future, that sacrifices should not be offered on any other. In short, to such lengths did he indulge himself in his favourite idolatry, and with such contempt did he look upon the true worship of God, that, after having defaced several of the most stately vessels in the temple, he caused it at length to be wholly shut up, and suppressed all Divine worship throughout his dominions. He ordered altars to be raised not only in various parts of Jerusalem, but likewise in all the principal cities of Judah, and on these were offered sacrifices to the various idols worshipped by the Syrians.

While Ahaz was thus carrying on his horrid impieties, God was pleased to stop his career, by suddenly cutting him off in the very prime of his life, being only thirty-six years of age, and in the sixteenth of his reign. He was buried in the City of David, but not in the royal sepulchres, that honour being denied him on account of the wickedness of his life.

On the death of Ahaz the throne of Judah was filled by his son Hezekiah, a prince of distinguished abilities, and celebrated for his strict adherence to justice and piety. No sooner had he got full possession of the kingdom than he began, in good earnest, to set about a thorough reformation of religion. He ordered the gates of the temple, which his father had shut up, to be opened, his father's new altar to be removed, and the altar of the Lord to be restored to its place. Having done this, he summoned together the priests and Levites, whom he addressed in words to this effect: "It is unnecessary for me to remind you of the misfortunes consequent on my father's sins, in your refusing the worship due to God, and uniting with him in the adoration of his idols: but as experience hath now taught you how dreadful a thing it
 "is

* The city of Damascus was in being during the time of Abraham, and some of the ancient fathers inform us, that this patriarch reigned there immediately after Damascus its founder. Thus much, however, is certain, that one, whom Abraham had made free, and appointed steward of his house, was of Damascus (Gen. xv. 2.) at the time he pursued Chedorlaomer and the five confederate kings as far as Hobah, which lies northward of Damascus, Gen. xiv. 15. The scripture does not mention any thing more of this city till the time of David, when Hadad (who, according to Josephus, was the first that took upon him the title of the king of Damascus) sending troops to the assistance of Hadadezer,

king of Zabab, was himself defeated by David, and his country subdued. Towards the end of Solomon's reign Rezin recovered the kingdom of Syria, and shook off the Jewish yoke, 1 Kings xi. 23, &c. Some time after this Asa, king of Judah, implored the help of Benhadad king of Damascus, against Baasha, king of Israel. 1 Kings xv. 18. And from this time the kings of Damascus were generally called Benhadad, till, in this last controversy with them, Ahaz called in the assistance of the Assyrian monarch, who killed their king, and carried his subjects into captivity, according to the predictions of the prophets Hiah and Ares. See chapters vii. et. seq.

“ is to trifle with heaven, I recommend that all
 “ past failings may be buried in oblivion : that
 “ you cleanse yourselves from former pollutions,
 “ and that you purify the temple by sacrifices
 “ and consecrations, in doing of which, and
 “ that alone, you may hope for future prof-
 “ perity, as well as pardon for the sins you have
 “ committed.”

The priests readily obeyed the king's com-
 mands, and having recovered all the vessels that
 could be found, they first cleansed them, and
 then placed them before the altar of the Lord ;
 after which they removed every impure thing
 that had been put into the temple by the wicked
 Ahaz, and threw them into the brook Kidron.

As soon as Hezekiah was informed of the ne-
 cessary preparations being made in the temple for
 the worshipping of God, he went to it early
 the next morning, attended by all the chief men
 of his court, and there offered burnt-offerings
 and sacrifices in such abundance, that the priests
 were too few to slay them, and were forced to
 accept of the help of the Levites, who (so great
 was the corruption then in the priesthood) were
 more ready to sanctify themselves than the priests.
 When they had made an end of offering, the
 king and all the people bowed themselves and
 worshipped, the priests sang praises to God in
 the words of David †, and of Asaph the seer,
 while the Levites accompanied their voices with
 various kinds of musical instruments.

The service of the temple being thus restored,
 Hezekiah next proposed within himself to revive
 the Passover, which, on account of the division
 of the kingdom, and the frequent commotions
 that took place in consequence thereof, had not
 been properly observed for a considerable time.
 To this purpose he advised with the princes and
 chief men of the kingdom, who unanimously
 approved of his intention ; but, because it was
 thought that neither the temple, the priests, nor
 the people, could be sufficiently sanctified against
 the usual time of observing it (which was in the
 first month of the year) it was resolved that it
 should be celebrated in the second ‡.

In consequence of this resolution, a procla-
 mation was issued out, by order of the king, re-
 quiring not only the people of Judah, but like-
 wise those of Israel, to attend the solemnity.
 The proclamation for this purpose, which was
 dispersed throughout the two kingdoms, was
 to the following effect: “ Ye children of
 “ Israel, turn again unto the Lord God of
 “ Abraham, Isaac and Israel, and he will return
 “ to the remnant of you, that are escaped out
 “ of the hands of the kings of Assyria. Be ye
 “ not like your fathers, and like your brethren,
 “ who trespassed against the Lord God of their
 “ fathers, who therefore gave them up to deso-

lation as ye see. Now be ye not stiff-necked,
 “ as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto
 “ the Lord, and enter into his sanctuary, which
 “ he hath sanctified for ever ; and serve the
 “ Lord your God, that the fierceness of his
 “ wrath may turn away from you. For if ye
 “ turn again unto the Lord, your brethren and
 “ your children shall find compassion before
 “ them that lead them captive, so that they
 “ shall come again into this land : for the Lord
 “ your God is gracious and merciful, and will
 “ not turn away his face from you, if ye return
 “ unto him.”

It could hardly be expected but that, after so
 long a disuse of this holy festival, an attempt to
 revive it should meet with some scorn and oppo-
 sition ; and therefore we need not wonder that
 many of the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh and
 Zebulun, should, on being invited to the feast
 by Hezekiah's messengers, treat them with con-
 tempt, which they did by reviling and mocking
 them. Great numbers, however, even from
 these parts, gladly embraced the opportunity of
 worshipping God the true way, and, previous to
 the time appointed, repaired to Jerusalem. As
 for the men of Judah, the power of God wrought
 so effectually upon them, that they unanimously
 obeyed the king and his princes, who, they verily
 believed, acted by the command of the Lord.

All things being prepared as well as the time
 would permit and the idolatrous altars in Jeru-
 salem demolished and thrown into the brook
 Kidron, the people met, and on the fourteenth
 day of the second month celebrated the passover.
 The good king Hezekiah, being fearful that in
 so great a multitude there might be some who
 had not observed the ceremony of sanctifying
 themselves, offered this atoning prayer for them :
 “ The good Lord pardon every one that pre-
 “ pareth his heart to seek God, even the Lord
 “ God of his fathers ; although he be not
 “ cleansed, according to the purification of the
 “ sanctuary.”

The concourse of people assembled on this
 occasion was so numerous, that it might be justly
 reckoned one of the greatest passovers that had
 been solemnized from the days of king Solomon.
 The usual time which the law directs for the
 continuance of this feast is seven days ; but, as
 it had been long neglected, they now doubled
 the time, and kept it fourteen. The king gave
 to the people one thousand bullocks and seven
 thousand sheep ; and the princes gave the like
 number of bullocks and ten thousand sheep.
 The whole fourteen days were spent in the
 greatest festivity, and universal joy prevailed
 throughout the streets of Jerusalem.

As soon as the passover was ended Hezekiah
 commanded the people to go immediately and
 break

† David was not only a great poet, but likewise master
 of music, and might therefore compose and modulate his
 own hymns ; but, whether the music of them might not be
 altered or improved in after-ages is a matter of some uncer-
 tainty. The Asaph, here mentioned, was the person who
 lived in David's days, so famous for his skill in music ; and
 the several devout pieces he composed are those we meet with,
 prefaced by his name, in the Book of Psalms.

‡ The direction which the law gives is, that the passover
 should be celebrated *on the fourteenth day of the first month :*

but because it was found impossible to get all things in readi-
 ness against that time, it was judged more adviseable to ad-
 journ it to the fourteenth of the next month, rather than stay
 till the next year : and for this they had some encourage-
 ment ; because the law allows that in case any man be unclean
 by reason of a dead body, or be on a journey afar off, he
 may eat the passover on the 14th day of the second month.
 Numb. ix. 10, 11. And what was an indulgence to parti-
 cular persons, they thought might well be allowed to the
 people in general.

break down all the images, burn the groves, and demolish the high-places and altars not only throughout Judea, but also in those parts which belonged to the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh §. He likewise gave orders for the destruction of the Brazen Serpent, which had been erected by Moses as a monument of God's great mercy to the Israelites in their passage through the wilderness; but which, owing to the iniquity of the preceding times, had been long made an object of idolatrous worship ||.

Hezekiah, having thus restored the true religion, and rooted out idolatry not only throughout his own dominions, but in some parts of those belonging to Israel, next directed his attention towards restoring the temple-worship to its ancient splendor and purity. To effect this, he put the priests and Levites in their courses, and appointed to each his proper ministration. The rites and first-fruits, which idolatrous princes had detained on purpose to bring the priesthood to poverty, and thence into contempt, he returned to the temple; and ordered the daily oblations, as well as the larger offerings on the greatest festivals of the year, to be defrayed solely at his expence.

From these acts of piety, and for his continuing to strengthen the establishment of the true religion, God was pleased to reward Hezekiah with a long and prosperous reign; and he justly merited the title given him by his subjects, namely, that of being one of the best of kings that ever sat upon the throne of Judah.

Hezekiah, having thoroughly restored the true worship of God throughout his dominions, next directed his attention to politics, by endeavouring to recover those places which had been taken by the Philistines during the reign of his father.

§ Though the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh lived in a part of the dominions belonging to the king of Israel, yet Hezekiah might direct this abolition of idolatry among them, either in virtue of a law, which bound Israel as well as Judah, and required the extirpation of these things in the whole land of Canaan, or, from a firm persuasion that his neighbour the king of Israel, who had permitted his subjects to repair to the passover, would not disapprove of his conduct.

|| The reason which the scripture assigns for Hezekiah's destroying this brazen serpent is, *because, unto this day, the children of Israel had burnt incense to it*, 2 Kings xviii. 4. We are not however to suppose, that, all along from the days of Moses, this brazen serpent was made an object of worship: this is what neither David, nor Solomon, in the beginning of his reign, would have allowed, nor can we think, but that either Aza, or Jehoshaphat, when they rooted out idolatry, would have made an end of this, had they perceived that the people, at that time, either paid worship, or burnt incense to it. The commencement of this superstition therefore must be of a later date, and since the time that Ahab's family, by being allied to the crown of Judah by marriage, introduced all kinds of idolatry. Now one false inducement to the worship of this image might arise from the words of Moses. For, whereas it is said, *that whosoever looketh upon it shall live*, (Numb. xxi. 8.) some might thence imagine, that, by its mediation, they might obtain a blessing, and so make it the object of their superstition at first. However, we may suppose that their burning incense, or any other perfumes before it, was designed only in honour to the true God, by whose direction Moses made it; but then, in process of time their superstition so much increased, that they either worshipped the God of Israel under that image, or (what is worse) substituted an heathen god in his stead, and worshipped the brazen serpent, as his image; which they might more easily be induced to do, because the practice of some neighbouring nations was to worship their gods un-

While Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, was engaged in the siege of Samaria, he marched with a considerable army against them, and, in a short time, not only regained all the cities of Judah which they had seized, during the time that Pekah, king of Israel, and Rezin, king of Syria, jointly distressed the land, but also dispossessed them of almost all their own territories, the two cities of Gath and Gaza excepted.

After Shalmaneser had reduced Samaria, and made the Israelites captives, he sent messengers to Hezekiah to demand the tribute which his father Ahaz had agreed to pay annually to the kings of Assyria. Hezekiah refused complying with this request, upon which Shalmaneser threatened to invade his dominions and lay siege to Jerusalem; but he was diverted from executing his design by being at this time engaged in war with the king of Tyre, and before it was ended he paid the debt of nature.

Shalmaneser was succeeded by his son Sennacherib, who was no sooner settled on the throne than he renewed the demand his father had made to Hezekiah for the tribute; but he still refusing to comply, Sennacherib made the necessary preparations for invading Judea, fully resolved to compel him to submit by force of arms.

About this time Hezekiah was taken exceedingly ill, and received a message from God, by the prophet Isaiah, to settle his affairs, and prepare for death. Hezekiah knew no other way of deprecating this sentence but by making immediate application to his God, whom he addressed with tears flowing from his eyes*, in these words: *I beseech thee, O Lord, remember how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight*. This short address had so good an effect that before Isaiah had passed

der the form of a serpent. On this account Hezekiah wisely chose rather to lose this memorial of God's wonderful mercy to his people in the wilderness, than suffer it any longer to be abused to idolatry. He therefore *broke it in pieces*; that is, as the Talmudists explain it, he ground it to powder, and then scattered it in the air that not the least remains of it might be afterwards seen.

* The message God sent to Hezekiah was, that *he should die*, that is, that his disemper, according to the natural course of things, was mortal, and above the power of human art to cure. But this denunciation was not absolute and irreversible. It implied a tacit condition, even as did Jonah's prediction of the destruction of Nineveh, which the repentance of its inhabitants prevented, as Hezekiah's humiliation retarded the time of his death. He had at this time been on the throne about fourteen years, and had no issue; and the Assyrians were now making great preparations to invade his kingdom. These matters considered, the king had other reasons, besides the natural aversion which all men have to death, to be concerned at the thoughts of its approach, and to wish for a prolongation of life. Length of days, and a peaceable enjoyment of old age, was a promise which God had made to his faithful servants, and the reward he usually paid them; and therefore Hezekiah was inclined to look upon himself as under God's displeasure for being so hastily summoned away. In himself he saw the royal family of David extinct, and all the hopes of having the promised Messiah born of his race become abortive. He saw the storm that was gathering and threatening his country with desolation, while there was not any of his family to succeed him on the throne, and all things were in danger of running into anarchy and confusion: and therefore, having this prospect before his eyes, he might well melt into tears at the apprehension of his approaching death, which would extinguish all his hopes, and complete all his fears, in making him go down childless to the grave.

passed the middle court, he was directed to return, and deliver to Hezekiah this second message: *Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee; on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the Lord. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee, and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for the sake of my servant David.*

Hezekiah, surprized at this sudden reverse of his doom, and fearful of its taking place, asked the prophet by what sign he might know he should recover. Isaiah told him he might take his choice, either to have the shadow on the sundial go ten degrees forward or backward; upon which, Hezekiah choosing the latter, it accordingly came to pass. The prophet then ordered a plaister of figs to be applied to that part of the king's body, from whence principally arose the cause of his complaint†; which having done, in the space of three days he recovered, and went up to the temple to return thanks to God for so wonderful a deliverance.

The fame of this cure, and the miracle attending it, spread so far as to reach the ears of Berodach-baladan the son of the king of Babylon, who sent ambassadors with letters and presents to congratulate Hezekiah on his recovery, and at the same time to form an alliance of friendship with him. Hezekiah was so taken with the honour done him on this occasion, that, thinking he could not more properly return the compliment than by shewing the ambassadors the grandeur of his kingdom, he very indiscreetly gave them a sight of all his strength and treasure. For this his misconduct the prophet Isaiah was sent to reprove him, and to let him know, that a day would come when all the stores he made such ostentation of, should be carried into Babylon, and that his sons, after becoming captives, should be eunuchs in the royal palace of that city. This severe admonition Hezekiah received in a very decent and humble manner, saying, *Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken. Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?*

During these transactions Sennacherib marched with his army against the fenced cities of Judah, and, having taken several of them, he came at length and sat down before Lachish, threatening, after he had possessed himself of that city, to lay siege to Jerusalem.

Intimation of Sennacherib's intentions being made known to Hezekiah, he by the advice of his chief counsellors, made all manner of preparations for a vigorous defence. He repaired the walls of the city, and farther strengthened them with additional fortifications. He provided

darts and shields in great abundance, and all other arms and implements that might be useful either to defend the place or annoy the enemy. He had the people enrolled who were fit for war, and placed over them good officers that they might be properly instructed in all military exercises. Having done this he assembled them together, near the gate of the city, and, to remove all fearful apprehensions they might entertain from the enemy, addressed them as follows: *Be strong and courageous; be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him. With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles.* This speech was highly pleasing to the people, who expressed their satisfaction by the loudest shouts and acclamations.

But, notwithstanding these preparations, Hezekiah, after reflecting on the inequality of power, thought it better to submit and compound the matter with Sennacherib, than to run the hazard of a battle, and suffer his country to be ravaged and plundered by the enemy. To this purpose he sent ambassadors to Lachish, intreating Sennacherib to withdraw his army, promising, on these conditions, to submit to such terms as he should think proper to stipulate. The haughty Assyrian demanded thirty talents of gold and three hundred talents of silver; which Hezekiah with great difficulty paid, being obliged, after exhausting all the treasures both of the palace and temple, to strip the very doors of the latter of the gold plates wherewith they were overlaid.

The base and perfidious Sennacherib, having received the money, refused to stand to the agreement, and, instead of raising the siege, or withdrawing his army, sent away a large detachment, under the command of Rabshakeh, Tartan and Rabaris, three of his generals, to lay siege to Jerusalem. As soon as they arrived near the walls of Jerusalem, they encamped their forces, and dispatched a messenger to demand a parley with Hezekiah. The king, thinking it unsafe to go in person, ordered Eliakim, his deputy-governor, together with Shebna and Joah, the keepers of the records, to repair to the Assyrian army, and remonstrate with the generals on the impropriety of their master's conduct. As soon as they came to the Assyrian camp, and related their business, Rabshakeh, the principal of the three generals, in a very peremptory and haughty manner, bade them enquire of their master why he had presumed to dispute admitting the army into the city, and hesitated to acknowledge submission to the great and powerful Sennacherib. He told them that Egypt was not in a condition to withstand the Assyrian army, and therefore, if Hezekiah flattered

† What Hezekiah's distemper was the Scripture does not expressly tell us. The original word denotes an inflammation, but of what kind it was we are not informed. It being therefore thus left to conjecture, some have thought it an imposthume, some a violent ulcer, and others a quinsey; all of whom are led in their opinions by what the naturalists tell us of the virtue of the article applied for his cure, viz. that in a decoction, are good to disperse any inflammation

about the glands, by gargling the throat; and that, in a cataplasm, they wonderfully soften and ripen any hard tumour. But wherever the quality of the application might be, that there was a Divine interposition in the whole affair is evident, both from the speediness of the cure, and the nature of the sign, which God was pleased to give Hezekiah, in order to convince him that what he had said by the mouth of the prophet would certainly take place.

tered himself with the hopes of assistance from that quarter, he would find himself deceived, for he would be trusting to a broken reed which would wound the hand that pressed it †. He desired them to inform Hezekiah that the present expedition was undertaken by the direction of the Lord, who had already granted his father a compleat victory over the Israelites, and would certainly render him equally successful in the war against Jerusalem,

Rabshakeh addressed himself to Hezekiah's ambassadors in Hebrew, in which language he was well versed; and Eliakim, apprehending that what he said being generally understood might have an unfavourable effect on the multitude (who were within hearing) requested him, if he had any thing farther to say, to speak it in the Syriac tongue: but Rabshakeh being apprized of Eliakim's motive for desiring a change of language, exalted his voice, and continued his harangue in Hebrew to this effect: "It is necessary (said he) that your people should understand the commands of the king my master. I am aware that it is your purpose to amuse the people with the vain hopes of subduing our army; if you have courage to attempt this enterprize I will supply you with two thousand horses:—but, alas, you are not able to provide them riders. Being thus reduced, why will you longer deliberate? Your compliance will ensure your safety, while a farther opposition will involve you in the most imminent danger; for necessity will, at length, compel the weak to yield to the strong."

When Hezekiah's messengers acquainted him with the purport of Rabshakeh's harangue to them, he rent his cloathes, put on sackcloth, went to the temple, and, prostrating himself on the ground, fervently prayed to God for his assistance and protection against his enemies. Having done this, he dispatched Eliakim and Shebna, accompanied by a number of priests, to the prophet Isaiah, beseeching him to exert his utmost endeavours, by prayers and sacrifices, to intercede with the Almighty in his behalf, that thereby he might be enabled to humble the power and pride of his enemies. Isaiah yielded to the request made to him on the part of Hezekiah, and sent the ambassadors back with this message to him: *Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the Lord: Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.*

Rabshakeh, having summoned Jerusalem to yield, and receiving no answer, returned with his forces to Sennacherib, who was now at Libnah, and where news was brought him that Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, had invaded some part of his dominions. In consequence of this intelligence, he immediately raised the siege at Libnah § in order to march against the enemy, but previous thereto he sent a summons to Hezekiah no less insolent than that given by word of mouth by his general Rabshakeh. This summons was sent in a letter, which Hezekiah had no sooner read, than he repaired to the temple, spread it before the Lord, and implored a deliverance from the outrageous Sennacherib. He soon after received a message from the prophet Isaiah, the purport of which was, that he need not fear the Divine assistance against his enemies, since the Lord had taken the city of Jerusalem under his protection, and therefore would not suffer the king of Assyria, notwithstanding all his vain boastings, to come near it.

In the mean time the king of Assyria, having engaged the Ethiopian army, and obtained a compleat victory, was in full march to Jerusalem, fully resolved to destroy the place, and put all the inhabitants to the sword. But in this he soon found himself mistaken, for the very night after the prophet had given Hezekiah assurance of security, an Angel of the Lord came down to the camp of the Assyrians, and smote no less than an hundred four score and five thousand men.

This so terrified Sennacherib, that he immediately hastened with the remainder of his army into his own country, and took up his residence at Nineveh. He had not, however, been long here, before Isaiah's prediction was fully verified: his two eldest sons, Adrammelech and Sharezer, formed a conspiracy against him, and taking the opportunity while he was at worship in the temple of his idol Nisroch, suddenly fell on him, and slew him. After committing the horrid deed, the murderers fled for security into Armenia, leaving Esarhaddon, their youngest brother, to succeed on the throne.

Hezekiah being now relieved from all his fears, through the signal destruction of the Assyrian army, lived the remainder of his days in peace and tranquillity, being both honoured and revered by all the neighbouring nations, who, from this, and some other instances, clearly perceived that he was under the immediate protection of God, and were therefore afraid to give him any molestation. Hezekiah, being at rest from wars, applied his thoughts to the good government of his people, and to such matters

† The words in the Text are, *Now behold thou trustest upon the Staff of this bruised Reed, even upon Egypt*, 2 Kings xviii. 21. The comparison is excellent, to denote an ally, that is not only weak and unable to help, but dangerous likewise to those that rely upon him for succour; and his representing the power of Egypt to be as brittle as the canes or reeds that grow on the banks of the Nile, (for it is to this, no doubt, that the Assyrian Orator allude) is a great beauty in the similitude. This, however, must be allowed, that what he here speaks, in contempt of the Egyptian strength, has more of ostentation in it, than truth; because the Assyrian

army, having lately failed in making an attempt to subdue that kingdom, was now returned into Judea.

§ Libnah was not far from Lachish, both being situated on the mountains of Judea; and it is probable, that Sennacherib, not finding himself able to carry the latter, had removed the siege to Libnah, which was a place not so well fortified, and so situated that, by keeping a good guard at the entrance of the mountains, he might carry on the siege without fear of interruption from the forces of any other power.

as were most necessary for the welfare and security of his kingdom. He erected several magazines in Jerusalem, which he well furnished with all kinds of ammunition, and made a new aqueduct for better supplying the city with water. At length, after a course of great and worthy actions, he died in the twenty-ninth year of his reign, and was buried, with great solemnity, in the most honourable part of the sepulchres of the descendants of David.

The character which the Scripture gives of Hezekiah is this: "That neither before nor after him, was there ever a king of Judah like him. He put his whole trust in the Lord, and cleaved to his law, without turning from it to the right or to the left. He opened the gates of the House of God, which his father had shut up, with a design to abolish the true worship of God. He commanded the priests and Levites to sanctify themselves, in order to the purifying of that holy place, which had been so abominably profaned. He cut down all idolatrous groves, and destroyed the Brazen Serpent which Moses had formerly made but was become an object of sacrilegious adorations. He took great care to re-establish the priests and Levites in their long discontinued functions, and to provide for their subsistence and maintenance; to which end he revived the laws of the tenths and first-fruits."

As this good king took pleasure and delight in the ways of God, and in establishing the purity of his worship, which had been long laid aside, so God was pleased to crown his enterprises with success, and to reward his piety by enabling him to conquer his enemies. The prophet Isaiah was sent to him, on several occasions, to be his counsellor and comforter. This holy man always encouraged him to put his trust more and more in that God whom he worshipped; and as it pleased the Almighty to put Hezekiah's faithfulness, and the uprightness of his heart to the test, by stirring up the most powerful and formidable enemies against him; so this holy prophet was always ready to comfort and encourage him, that he might not be terrified at the danger that threatened him.

These circumstances furnish us with the most evincing proof how happy that prince must be, who listens to, and adviseth with, holy and good men; and Isaiah, no doubt, thought himself happy in living under the government of so good and religious a prince. It farther appears, from this remarkable example, that when kings truly fear God, they easily agree with those who are his true servants, and ready to comply with whatsoever they declare to them in the name of the Lord; accounting it a greater and more real honour to respect his word in his ministers, than to be honoured and obeyed by all their subjects.

C H A P. X.

Manasseh succeeds to the government of Judah after the death of Hezekiah. He reigns wickedly, and gives all the encouragement in his power towards advancing idolatry. He is attacked by Esarhadon, king of Assyria, who, after obtaining a compleat victory, carries him prisoner to Babylon. He repents for his past conduct, is set at liberty, and returns to Jerusalem. He removes idolatry, and restores the true religion. He dies, and is succeeded by his son Ammon, who, after a reign of only two years, is murdered by some of his domestics. Josiah, when only eight years of age, succeeds to the throne of Judah. He destroys idolatry, and makes a thorough reformation in religion. He gives orders for repairing the temple. Hilkiab, the high-priest, finds the book of the law of Moses, and presents it in great form to Josiah. The king, on reading it, and finding the heavy curses denounced against a wicked people, is greatly afflicted. He consults the prophetess Huldab, from whom he receives some consolation. He calls an assembly of the people, and after causing the Book of the law of God to be distinctly read to them, makes a covenant for the strict observance of every thing contained in it. He makes a farther reformation in his kingdom, and keeps the Passover with great strictness and solemnity. He engages the Egyptian army under Necho, and being slain, is universally lamented by the people.

THE good king Hezekiah was succeeded on the throne of Judah by his son Manasseh, who, at the time of his accession, was only twelve years of age. Though he was but young, yet he could not be a stranger to the happy measures pursued by his father; but, as he had the misfortune to fall into the hands of such guardians and chief ministers as were ill affected to Hezekiah's reformation, they took all the care imaginable to breed him up in the strongest aversion to it, and to corrupt his mind

with the worst of principles both as to religion and government.

In the course of a few years all that had been done by Hezekiah was compleatly overthrown by Manasseh. The most abominable practices, which had called down the vengeance of heaven upon the Israelites, were the examples by which his conduct was regulated. He not only worshipped idols, restored high-places, and erected altars unto Baal, but even profaned the holy temple, by taking out the Ark of the Covenant, and

and placing an idol in its stead. He made his son pass through the fire to Moloch, practised witchcrafts and enchantments, and consulted soothsayers, and such other persons as dealt with familiar spirits.

Manasseh was naturally of a very cruel disposition, and therefore such as would not conform to his abominations, he persecuted with the greatest severity. Men of the most exemplary piety were put to death for disapproving of his maxims, and even some of the prophets || fell sacrifices to his wicked apostacy: scarce a day passed but great numbers were put to the sword, and otherwise divested of their existence, so that the streets of Jerusalem were filled with the blood of his innocent subjects.

These horrid impieties so provoked the Lord, that he was pleased to send some of his prophets to Manasseh with this dreadful message: "Because Manasseh, king of Judah, hath done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which were before him, and hath made Judah to sin also with his idols: therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Behold, I will bring such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down. And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies; because they have done that which was evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day."

Manasseh, instead of being any ways affected at those threats, treated the messengers with contempt; and continuing to pursue his iniquitous courses, the Almighty was pleased to punish him by means of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria. This prince, having been some time settled on the throne, directed his thoughts towards the recovery of those places his father Sennacherib had lost in different parts of Syria and Palestine. For this purpose he raised a very considerable army, at the head of which he marched into the territories of the ten tribes, and after possessing himself of various places, returned, taking with him great numbers of the Israelites who had been left after the reduction of Samaria by his grand father Shalmaneser.

Esarhaddon, having thus far proved successful,

dispatched a considerable part of his army, under the command of his most experienced generals, to invade Judea, and, if possible, to reduce the whole country. Manasseh marched with his army, against them, and a desperate battle ensued, which terminated in favour of the Assyrians. Manasseh, in order to save himself, fled, and took shelter in a thicket of briars and brambles, but being discovered by the enemy, they conducted him to Esarhaddon*, who put him in irons, and carried him prisoner to Babylon.

This distressed situation greatly afflicted Manasseh, and made him so sensible of his heinous provocations against God, that with deep sorrow and humiliation, he, in the most fervent manner, implored the Divine forgiveness†. The Almighty was pleased to listen to his prayers, and so to soften the heart of Esarhaddon, that, after some time had elapsed, he restored him to his liberty, and re-instated him in his kingdom.

Manasseh now exerted his utmost abilities to make every possible atonement he could for his former crimes. He purified the city of Jerusalem, consecrated the holy temple anew, and made it the business of his life to manifest a due reverence and gratitude towards his Divine Protector. Conscious that his former guilt had, in a great measure, been the cause of the miseries which his people had endured, he endeavoured to effect a reformation among them, both by his example and authority. He caused an altar to be erected agreeable to the directions of Moses, upon which daily oblations were made: and having restored the religious ceremonies to their original purity, he directed his attention towards improving the fortifications of the city. He made the necessary reparations in the old walls, and, as a farther security, encompassed them with new ones. He erected several strong and lofty towers, and provided the out-works with all necessary ammunition and stores.

Manasseh continued to devote his time to the advancement and support of the true religion, as well as the welfare and security of his subjects, during the remainder of his life, and for which God was pleased to bless him with a long and prosperous reign; longer, indeed, than any of the kings of Judah reigned, either before or after him. He died after possessing the throne full fifty-five years; and yet (notwithstanding his signal repentance) because his former wickedness was so great, he was not allowed the honour of being buried in any of the royal sepulchres, but was laid in a grave made in the garden

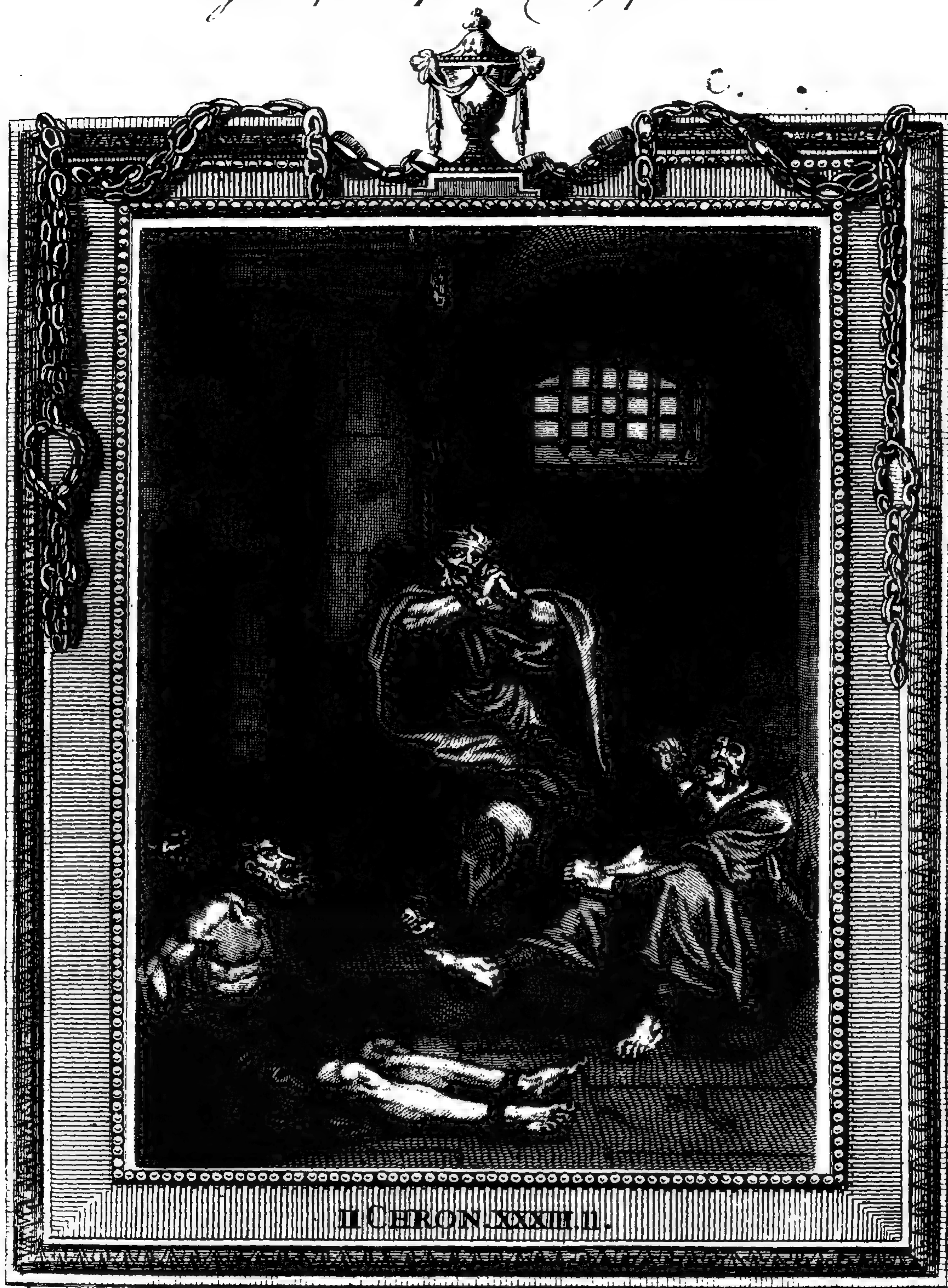
|| Among these was the prophet Isaiah, who was now upwards of an hundred years of age. In the late reign he was in great esteem at court, and being himself of the blood royal, he thought it more incumbent on him to endeavour to reclaim Manasseh from his degenerate and wicked courses. But this so exasperated the king against him, that, instead of paying any attention to his remonstrances, he caused him to be apprehended, and, to make his torture both more lingering and exquisite, had him tawn asunder with a wooden saw; and to this it is probable the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews refers, when he says, *they were sawed asunder*, Heb. xi. 37.

* We learn, from Isaiah xx. 1. that Esarhaddon (whom the sacred writer in that place calls Sargon) king of Assyria,

sent Tartan his general, into Palestine; and it was he, very probably, who took Manasseh, and carried him prisoner to Babylon. Esarhaddon was, some time before, no more than king of Assyria; but, on his accession to the throne, he made himself master of Babylon and Chaldaea, and so united the two empires together.

† We have a prayer which, it is said, Manasseh made during his imprisonment at Babylon. The church does not receive it as canonical; but it has a place among the apocryphal pieces, and, in our collection, stands before the Books of the Maccabees. The Greek church has received it into its book of prayers, and it is sometimes used in the performance of their religious worship.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



MANASSEH. King of JUDAH, loaded with CHAINS,

and confined in prison at Babylon, by order of King Esarhaddon.

garden belonging to his own house, called the Garden of Uzzah †.

Manasseh was succeeded on the throne by his son Ammon; who, imitating the first part of his father's reign, and not the repentance of his latter, gave himself up to all manner of wickedness and impiety; so that God was pleased to shorten his government, by permitting some of his own domestics (after a reign of only two years) to conspire against him and slay him. But, wicked, as he was; the people took care to revenge his murder, by putting to death all those who were any ways concerned in it. They would not, however; honour his remains with a place among the sepulchres of the sons of David, but deposited them with those of his father in the Garden of Uzzah.

On the death of Ammon the throne of Judah was filled by his son Josiah, who, at the time of his accession, was only eight years of age. He was a prince naturally possessed of the most amiable and virtuous disposition; and, having the happiness to fall under the protection and management of better guardians, during his minority, than did Manasseh, his grandfather, he proved, when grown up, a prince of very extraordinary worth, and, from his judicious and wise conduct, became universally beloved and respected by his subjects.

Before Josiah had compleated his twelfth year he gave an instance of his piety, by extirpating the abominable worship of idols, and restoring the people to the religion of the true God. Such of the ordinances of his predecessors as he found productive of ill consequences he abolished: such institutions as were expedient he retained; and to those which required alterations, he made amendments which would have conferred honour on the most consummate wisdom, and the experience of advanced years.

Having made this reform in the city of Jerusalem and its environs, he next took a progress throughout the kingdoms, firmly resolved to purge religion from all those corruptions which had been introduced in the preceding reigns. He caused all the groves and altars, together with the carved and molten images, which his apostate predecessors had dedicated to idolatrous worship, to be destroyed. The graves of idolatrous priests he ordered to be opened, and their bones taken up and burnt on the altars;

and whatever priests of the Levitical order had, at any time sacrificed on the high-places, though it were to the true God, he took care to remove from the sacerdotal office.

Not satisfied with having made this reform in his own dominions, Josiah visited the cities of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the rest of the land, which had formerly been possessed by the ten tribes, and there did the like §.—He put to death all the priests of the high-places, and burnt their bodies upon the altars on which they had been accustomed to offer up sacrifices; and every monument of idolatry that could be found he effectually destroyed.

Josiah, having thus made an universal reformation in religion, not only in his own dominions, but those likewise which formerly belonged to Israel, returned to Jerusalem, and next directed his attention towards the reparation of the temple. For this purpose he deputed commissioners to receive contributions of gold and silver from the people; but, averse to give cause of complaint, his subjects were at liberty either to promote or decline the subscription. The contributions being deposited in the treasury, Maaseiah, the governor of the city, Shaphan the scribe, Joah the recorder, and Hilkiah, the high-priest, were appointed to engage workmen, provide materials, and regulate the expences of the intended reparations. The king directed Hilkiah to apply what gold and silver should remain, after every thing was paid for the necessary repairs of the temple, in the formation of cups, chalices, and other vessels and utensils for the service of the holy religion; and likewise ordered that all the gold and silver deposited in the royal treasury should be manufactured into vessels for the like purpose.

The repairs of the temple being compleated, and all expences defrayed, Hilkiah, in conformity to the king's orders, took out the money (of which there was a considerable overplus) for the purpose of converting it into vessels for the use of the temple, in doing of which he found a Book of the law of the Lord, given by Moses. This Book Hilkiah gave to Shaphan the king's secretary, who, accompanied by him, and several others of the priests, went to the king, and after informing him that his commands had been strictly obeyed relative to the reparation of the temple, presented it to him in great form, telling him

† It is the opinion of some that this garden was made in that very spot of ground where Uzzah was struck dead for touching the Ark of the Lord, 2 Sam. vi. 7. while others imagine, that it was the place where Uzziah, who died a leper, was buried, 2 Chron. xxvi. 23. and that Manasseh was buried here, he being unworthy, because of his manifold sins (whereof he nevertheless repented) to be laid in any of the royal sepulchres of the kings of Judah.

§ It may be thought by some that Josiah followed the dictates of his zeal a little too far in destroying the images and altars, with other monuments of idolatry, in the kingdom of Israel, where he had neither any regal or judicial authority: but it should be remembered, that his authority in this regard was founded upon an antient prediction, where he is particularly named, and appointed to this work of reformation by God himself; and that, consequently, he could not be guilty of an infringement upon another's right, even though he had no farther commission. But the ten tribes,

we are to consider, being now gone into captivity, the antient right, which David and his posterity had to the whole kingdom of Israel (before it was dismembered by Jeroboam, and his successors) devolved upon Josiah. The people, who escaped the captivity, were united with his subjects, and put themselves under his protection. They came to the worship of God at Jerusalem, and did doubtless gladly comply with his extirpation of idolatry, at which the Cushites, (the new inhabitants of the country, who worshipped their Gods in another manner) were not at all offended. The kings of Assyria, 'tis true, were the lords and conquerors of the country; but, from the time of Manasseh's reformation, they seem to have conferred upon the kings of Judah (who might thereupon become their homagers) a sovereignty in all the land of Canaan, to the same extent, wherein it was held by David and Solomon, before it was divided into two kingdoms. So that Josiah, for sundry reasons, had sufficient power and authority to visit the kingdom of Israel, and to purge it from idolatry, as well as his own.

him what it was, and where it had been found. The king ordered Shaphan to read a part of its contents, which being done Jofiah, with agony of grief, rent his robes in dread of the heavy curses denounced against a wicked people ||. In the height of his affliction he desired Hilkiab, with several of the priests who were present, to go immediately to the prophetess Huldah *, requesting them to unite their endeavours to prevail upon her to make intercession with God for pardon towards himself and his subjects. He told them there was great reason to apprehend that the vengeance of heaven would be directed towards the present generation, as a punishment for the iniquities of their progenitors; and that without obtaining a reconciliation with the Lord, they should be dispersed over the face of the earth, and terminate their lives in misery.

Hilkiab, with the rest of the people appointed to accompany him, immediately repaired to the prophetess, to whom having related the cause of the king's affliction, and his earnest desire she would intercede with God in behalf of him and his subjects, she answered them as follows: " Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Tell ye " the man that sent you to me, Thus saith the " Lord, Behold, I will bring evil upon this " place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even " all the curses that are written in the book " which they have read before the king of Ju- " dah: Because they have forsaken me, and " have burned incense unto other gods, that " they might provoke me to anger with all the " works of their hands: therefore my wrath " shall be poured out upon this place, and shall " not be quenched. And as for the king of " Judah, who sent you to enquire of the Lord, " so shall ye say unto him, Thus saith the Lord " God of Israel, concerning the words which " thou hast heard; Because thine heart was ten- " der, and thou didst humble thyself before " God, when thou heardest his words against " this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, " and humblest thyself before me, and didst " rend thy clothes, and weep before me, I have " even heard thee also, saith the Lord. Behold, " I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou " shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, nei- " ther shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will " bring upon this place, and upon the inhabi- " tants of the same."

|| Whether it was the whole Pentateuch, or the Book of Deuteronomy only, which the high-priest found in the temple, is uncertain; but it is generally agreed, that the part, which Shaphan read to the king, was taken out of the Book of Deuteronomy, and, not without some probability, that the xxviiith, xxixth, and xxxth chapters were that portion of scripture, which the secretary, who (as we are told, 2 Kings xxii. 8.) had read the book before he brought it to the king, thought proper upon this occasion to turn to; for therein is contained a renewal of the covenant, which Moses, as mediator, had made between God and the people of Israel at Mount Horeb; and therein are those threats and terrible comminations to the transgressors of the law, whether prince or people, which affected Jofiah so much; and which Moses had given to the Levites to put on the side of the covenant, that it might be there for a witness against the transgressors of it, Deut. xxxi. 25, 26.

* This is the only mention we have of this prophetess, and certainly it makes much to her renown, that she was consulted upon this weighty occasion, when both Jeremiah

As soon as Jofiah received this message from the prophetess, he immediately dispatched messengers to the several cities within his dominions, commanding the priests, Levites, and his subjects in general, to repair, with all expedition, to Jerusalem. These orders being obeyed, and the people assembled, he repaired to the temple, where, in the hearing of the whole multitude, he caused the law of God to be distinctly read; after which both he and all the people entered into a covenant strictly to obey every article contained in that sacred book. Sacrifices were then made, and prayers offered up for obtaining the blessing and protection of God; after which the king dismissed the people, and returned to his palace.

Soon after this Jofiah made another progress not only throughout his own dominions, but also into the principal cities of Samaria; and wherever he found any the least relic of idolatry, he caused it to be totally destroyed.

Having now made a thorough reformation in religion, and, in the most extensive manner, restored the true worship of God, Jofiah, on his return home, assembled the people at Jerusalem for the purpose of celebrating the passover, the time for that festival being near at hand. On this occasion the king gave from his own store thirty thousand lambs and kids, and three thousand oxen: the principal priests presented to the others of the sacerdotal order two thousand six hundred lambs, and three hundred oxen; and the chiefs of the Levites gave to their tribes five thousand lambs and five hundred oxen. A solemn sacrifice was made of these victims, according to the precepts of Moses; and the ceremony was performed under the direction of the priests. An exact conformity to the law and antient usage was observed on the celebration of this festival, which was the most solemn that had been known since the time of the prophet Samuel. *And there was no passover like to that kept in Israel, from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Jofiah kept, and the priests and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.* In a word, this excellent prince did all that in him lay to atone for the sins of the people, and appease the wrath of God; but the Divine decree for the removal of Judah into a land of their

and Zephaniah were at that time prophets in Judah. But Zephaniah perhaps at that time might not have commenced a prophet; because, though we are told that he prophesied in the days of Jofiah, Zeph. i. 1. yet we are no where informed, in what part of his reign he entered upon the prophetic office. Jeremiah too might at that time be absent from Jerusalem, at his house at Anathoth, or some more remote part of the kingdom; so that, considering Jofiah's haste and impatience, there might be no other remedy at hand to apply to but this woman. *Great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us,* says the king to his ministers, 2 Kings xxii. 13. and therefore his intent, in sending them, might be to enquire, whether there were any hopes of appeasing his wrath, and in what manner it was to be done. Being therefore well assured of this woman's fidelity, in delivering the mind and counsel of God, the ministers, who went to enquire, concluded rightly, that it was much more considerable, what message God sent, than by whose hand it was that he conveyed it.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



Kothard delin.

Grignon sculp.

*JOSIAH, King of Judah receiving the BOOK of the LAW of MOSES.
which had been found in the Temple by HILKIAH the High Priest.*

their captivity was passed, irrevocably passed †.

A short time after the celebration of the passover, Pharaoh Necho ‡, king of Egypt, desired permission of Josiah to pass through Judea, in order to go and attack Charchemish, a city belonging to the king of Babylon, and situated upon the banks of the Euphrates. Josiah would not, by any means, consent to this request; but, getting together his forces, posted himself in the Valley of Megiddo, with a design of obstructing his passage. The Egyptian king, hearing of this, sent ambassadors to Josiah, desiring him to desist, declaring that he came not to invade his territories, but purely to do himself justice on the king of Babylon; and assuring him withal, that what he did, in this case, was by the order and appointment of God. *What, (said he) have I to do with thee thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war: for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not.*

Josiah did not think proper to return any answer to this message; and therefore, on Necho's marching up to the place where he was posted to receive him, a battle immediately ensued, wherein the Egyptian archers discovering Josiah (though he had disguised himself before the action began) plied that quarter of the army where he fought so very warmly with their ar-

rows, that Josiah at length receiving a mortal wound from one of them, was removed into another chariot §, and conveyed to Jerusalem, where, after a reign of thirty-one years, he died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his ancestors.

The death of so excellent a prince was deservedly lamented by all his people, but by none more sincerely than the prophet Jeremiah, who (having a thorough sense of the greatness of the loss, as well as full foresight of the fore calamities which were afterwards to follow upon the whole kingdom of Judah) wrote a song of *lamentation* || on this occasion: but that is lost; and the other, which goes under his name, and is still remaining, was composed on the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

The character given of Josiah by the author of the Book of Ecclesiasticus is as follows: "All (says he) except David, and Hezekiah, and Josiah, were defective. They forsook the law of the Most High; even the kings of Judah failed. But the remembrance of Josiah is like the composition of the perfume that is made by the art of the apothecary: it is as sweet as honey in all mouths, and as music at a banquet of wine. He behaved himself uprightly in the conversion of the people, and took away the abomination of iniquity. He directed his heart unto the Lord, and, in the time of the Ungodly, he established the worship of God."

† Though Josiah was doubtless sincere in what he did, and omitted nothing to restore the purity of God's worship wherever his power extended, yet the people had still an hankering after the corruption of the former part of Manasseh's reign. They complied indeed, with the present reformation, but this was only out of fear of incurring the king's displeasure, or of feeling the severity of his justice. Their hearts were not right towards God, as appears from the writings of the prophets who lived in those times; and therefore, seeing no sign of their real repentance, God was pleased to preserve the decree of their future punishment.

‡ Pharaoh signifies no more, in the Egyptian language, than king, and was therefore given to any one that sat upon that throne: but Necho (according to Herodotus) was his proper name, though some will have it to be an appellative, which signifies *lame*, because this Pharaoh (as they suppose) had a lameness, which proceeded from some wound he had received in the wars. The same historian tells us, that he was the son and successor of Psameticus, king of Egypt, and a man of a bold enterprising spirit; that he made an attempt to join the Nile and the Red Sea, by drawing a canal from one to the other; that, though he failed in this design, yet, by sending a fleet from the Red Sea through the straits of Babel Mandel, he discovered the Coasts of Africa, and, in this his expedition to the Euphrates, resolved to bid fair (by destroying the united force of the Babylonians

and Medes) for the whole monarchy of Asia.

§ It was the custom of war, in former times, for great officers to have their led horses, that, if one failed, they might mount another. The kings of Persia (as Quintus Curtius informs us) had horses attending their chariots, which, in case of any accident, they might make to; and, in like manner, we may presume that, when it became a fashion to fight in chariots, all great captains had an empty one following them, into which they might betake themselves, if any mischance befel them in the other.

|| It was usual with the Jews to make Lamentations, or mournful songs, on the deaths of great men, princes and heroes, who had distinguished themselves in arms, or by any civil arts had merited well of their country. From the expression in 2 Chron. xxxv. 25. *Behold they are written in the Lamentations*, we may infer, that they had certain Collections of this kind of Composition. The author of the Book of Samuel has preserved those which David made on the deaths of Saul and Jonathan, of Abner and Absalom; But this mournful poem, which the disconsolate prophet made on the immature death of good Josiah is no where extant; which is a loss the more to be deplored, because, in all probability, it was a master-piece in its kind, as there never was an author more deeply affected with his subject, or more capable of carrying it through all the tender sentiments of sorrow and compassion, than the prophet Jeremiah.

C H A P. XI.

Jehoahaz succeeds to the government of Judah after the death of his father Josiah. He is deposed by Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, who puts him in prison, where he continues the remainder of his life. He is succeeded by his brother Eliakim, whose name, by order of Necho, is changed to that of Jehoiakim. He reigns wickedly, and puts to death the prophet Urijah. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, invades Jerusalem, conquers it, and takes Jehoiakim prisoner, but afterwards releases him. Jeremiah upbraids the people with their disobedience, and prophesies their captivity, for which he is obliged to conceal himself to avoid their resentment. He employs one Baruch to write a copy of his prophecies, and read them to the people in the temple. Jehoiakim, being informed of this, sends for the book, and, after hearing a part of it read, destroys it, ordering the prophet and his amanuensis to be taken into custody. Jehoiakim refuses any longer to pay tribute to Nebuchadnezzar, who, in consequence thereof, sends an army against him. He is taken prisoner by the Babylonians, and put to death. He is succeeded by his son Jehoiachin, who, after a reign of only three months, is taken prisoner to Nebuchadnezzar, and sent to Babylon. Zedekiah is made king of Judah in his stead. He is advised by Jeremiah to live in obedience to the king of Babylon, for which the prophet is grossly abused. Jeremiah prophesies the destruction of Babylon, and Ezekiel that of Jerusalem.

ON the death of Josiah, his son Jehoahaz * was anointed king of Judah; but his reign was of short duration. He was naturally a very wicked prince, and shewed manifest signs of his wishes to overturn that wise and good regulation which had, with so much pains, been established by his predecessor. But his wicked intentions were frustrated by means of Pharaoh-Necho, king of Egypt, who, on his return from the expedition against the Babylonians (in which he had proved successful) hearing that Jehoahaz had assumed the sovereignty of Judah sent for him to Riblah † in Syria, whither he had no sooner arrived than he caused him to be put in chains, and sent to Egypt, where he spent the remainder of his days in misery and disgrace.

Jehoahaz had an elder brother named Eliakim, whom Necho, on his going to Jerusalem, placed on the throne of Judah, having first changed his name to Jehoiakim. He laid him under an annual tribute of an hundred talents of silver and one of gold, having done which, he left Jerusalem, and returned in triumph to his own country. The money for discharging this tribute Jehoiakim raised by a general tax through-

out his kingdom, rating every man according to his circumstances ‡.

No sooner was Jehoiakim fully placed on the throne of Judah, than he began, in imitation of his brother, to destroy that good order and discipline which had been established by his father; and the people, who never with sincerity came into that good king's reformation, took this opportunity of following the bent of their depraved inclinations. For these impieties God was pleased to send the prophet Jeremiah to admonish and exhort them to repentance, and to assure them, that if they persisted in their wicked way of living, he would make the temple like the house of Shiloh, and the city of Jerusalem a curse to all nations. Having received this message, Jeremiah went first to the king's palace, where he denounced God's judgments against him and his family; after which he repaired to the temple, and there spoke in like manner to the people. The priests, being offended at the freedom of Jeremiah, caused him to be seized, and brought before the king's council, in hopes of having him put to death; but Ahikam, one of the chief lords thereof, so interceded in his behalf, that he got him discharged.

* Jehoahaz was not the eldest son of Josiah, as will appear from the following circumstances. He was but twenty-three years of age when he began to reign, and reigned only three months; after which his brother Jehoiakim, when he was made king, was five and twenty years old. On this account it is said, that the people anointed him, because, as he did not come to the crown by right of succession, his title might have otherwise been disputed; for in all controverted cases, and where the kingdom came to be contested, anointing was ever thought to give the preference. At this time, however, the Jews might have some reason to prefer the younger brother, because, very probably, he was of a more martial spirit, and better qualified to defend their liberties against the

king of Egypt. His proper name, it is thought, was Shallum; but the learned bishop Usher supposes that the people, looking upon this as ominous (because Shallum, king of Israel, reigned but one month) changed it to Jehoahaz.

† Riblah, according to St. Jerome, was the same place which was afterwards called Antioch. Its situation was one of the most agreeable in all Syria, for which reason the kings of Babylon frequently made it their place of residence.

‡ It is very probable the prophet Jeremiah had regard to this taxation, when, in his mournful complaint of Jerusalem, he says, *she that was great among the nations, and prince among the provinces, how is she become tributary?* Lam. i. 1

charged by the general consent not only of the princes, but likewise of all the elders of the people then present.

There was at this time § another prophet named Urijah, who had likewise declared against the iniquity of the prince and the people; but he did not escape the resentment of the king. As soon as he understood that Jehoiakim had a design against his life, he fled into Egypt; but this, however, did not secure him: the king sent messengers after him, and being apprehended and brought back to Jerusalem, he was put to death, and his remains treated with very great indignity.

About three years after Jehoiakim had been on the throne of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon and Assyria, to revenge the late expedition of Pharaoh-Necho, king of Egypt, who had taken from him many principal places in Syria and Palestine, marched against him with a very powerful army, and having totally defeated the troops under his command, so improved that victory, that, in a very short time, he took from him all the country that lies between the river Euphrates and the Nile.

Having proved thus successful over Necho, king of Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar next laid siege to Jerusalem, which he soon took, and after plundering the temple, and making the king prisoner, returned with him and the spoil in triumph to Babylon ||. In a short time, however, he released the king, and restored him to his crown, on condition that he should become tributary to him during the remainder of his life.

A circumstance took place, previous to Nebuchadnezzar's besieging Jerusalem, which clearly evinced the beneficence of Providence to an undeserving people, and, had they not been hardened in their wickedness, might have so opened their eyes as to have produced a reformation. The approach of Nebuchadnezzar's army having alarmed the Rechabites*, (who, according to the institution of Jonadab, the son of Rechab, their founder, had always abstained from wine, and hitherto only lived in tents) they, apprehending themselves in more danger in the open country than in the capital, fled for safety to Jerusalem. By means of these people God

was pleased to point out to the Jews, in the most clear light, their great disobedience to his word and command. He ordered the prophet Jeremiah to conduct them to the temple, and there, in the presence of the people, offer them wine to drink. The prophet obeyed the Divine injunction, but when he presented it to the Rechabites, they refused his offer, alledging for a reason that it was contrary to their institution, which they had never yet violated. The prophet, after due commendation of their obedience, turned it upon the Jews, and reproached them, who were God's peculiar people, for being less observant of his laws, than the poor Rechabites (who were not of the stock of Israel) had been of the injunctions of their ancestor.

But this had no effect on the depraved Jews, who still gave a loose to their wicked inclinations, in which, indeed, they were encouraged by the king after his return from captivity. To strike, if possible, some impression on them, Jeremiah prophesied many dire calamities and woeful desolations that would fall on them if they did not repent; more particularly that Nebuchadnezzar would again come against Judah and Jerusalem, that he would lay waste the country, and carry the people captive to Babylon, where they should continue in that situation for the space of seventy years. But this likewise was so far from making the least impression on the people, that it only enraged and exasperated them the more against the prophet, inasmuch that, thinking himself in danger from their malicious and wrathful indignation, he, for some time, concealed himself, and that so privately, that though diligent search was made after him, he could not be found.

While Jeremiah was in this state of seclusion, he received a message from God, commanding him to collect together, and digest in a book, all the prophecies which he had given him, not only against Israel and Judah, but likewise other nations, from the time that he first began to prophesy (which was in the thirteenth year of the good king Josiah) that, by the people's hearing all his judgments summoned up together against them, they might be brought to some sense of their transgressions, and repent of those evil deeds they had so long and so strongly imbibed.

In

§ About this time also were living the prophets, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Nahum, who, being called to the prophetic office in the reign of Josiah, continued (very likely) to this time, because we find them prophesying the same things that Jeremiah did, viz. the destruction and desolation of Judah and Jerusalem, for the many heinous sins of which they were guilty. As to Habakkuk, neither the time in which he lived, nor the parents from whom he was descended, are any where named in scripture; but his prophesying the coming of the Chaldeans, in the same manner that Jeremiah did, gives us reason to believe, that he lived in the same time. Of Zephaniah it is directly said, that he prophesied in the time of Josiah, and in his pedigree, (which is also given us) his father's grandfather is called Hezekiah, whom some take for the king of Judah, and, consequently, reckon this prophet to have been of royal descent. As to Nahum, lastly, it is certain, that he prophesied after the captivity of the ten tribes, and before that of the other two, which he foretold. Though therefore the Jews do generally place him in Manasseh's reign, yet others chuse to refer him to the latter part of Josiah's, as being nearer to

the destruction of Nineveh, and of the Assyrian monarchy, to which several prophecies of his principally relate.

|| It is thought, and with great reason, that at this time the prophet Daniel, with his three companions, Hananiah, Michael and Azariah (who were afterwards called Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego) were carried with the king captives to Babylon. For Daniel says, when Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiakim, and the vessels of the temple, he spake unto Ashpenaz, the master of the Eunuchs, that he should take with him to Babylon some of the children of Israel, of the seed of the king, and of the princes, such as were well favoured, and without blemish, of good parts and well educated; that being instructed in the language and learning of the Chaldeans, they might be fit to serve the king in his palace; and that the eunuchs, among others, made choice of these four. See Dan. i. 3, 4, 6.

* The Rechabites were Midianites, who lived in tent; and although, in some respects, they conformed to the laws of Moses, yet they had not hitherto been admitted as proselytes, and, consequently, could not attend the temple service.

In obedience to the Divine orders, Jeremiah employed Baruch †, his amanuensis, to write down what he should dictate, the whole of which formed an accurate list of the various prophecies Jeremiah had received, at different times, from God. This being done, he ordered Baruch to go to the temple on the day of Expiation, and there read the contents of it in the hearing of all the people. Baruch strictly followed his master's instructions, and after reading the book first to the people who were in the courts below, he next repaired to the secretary's chamber, where he again read it in the presence of the princes and elders. As soon as the latter heard the contents, they advised Baruch immediately to depart, and, with his master, to secrete themselves till they should know the king's pleasure concerning it, when they would apprise them of the issue. In consequence of this advice Baruch departed, leaving the book in the custody of the princes and elders of the people.

It was not long before Jehoiakim was informed of what had passed, and that the prophecies of Jeremiah had been read in the temple, not only before the people in general, but likewise in the hearing of the princes and principal men belonging to the court. Being unacquainted with the contents he sent one of his attendants for the book in which they were contained, who, having brought it, he commanded him to read it. The attendant obeyed the royal orders; but he had not gone far, before the king, disgusted at hearing the judgments denounced against him and his people, snatched it out of his hand, and, notwithstanding the importunity of his nobles to dissuade him from his intentions, he first cut the book to pieces, and then committed it to the flames. Having done this, he immediately dispatched officers to apprehend the prophet and his amanuensis, but, agreeable to the advice of the princes, they had both withdrawn, nor could the least tidings be heard of them.

In consequence of the destruction of this first book, Jeremiah was commanded to make another of the like nature; and to it were added some farther denunciations against Jehoiakim

and his house, which, in a short time, began to take effect.

Jehoiakim had lived in subjection to the king of Babylon for three years, during which he had punctually paid the tribute levied on him by Nebuchadnezzar, when he restored him to his liberty. But Jehoiakim now determined to throw off the yoke, and therefore not only refused to pay him any more tribute, but, as a mark of his intentions to make all the opposition that laid in his power, formed a confederacy with Necho king of Egypt, the professed enemy of Nebuchadnezzar.

Nebuchadnezzar, not being at leisure ‡ himself to chastise the insolence and disobedience of Jehoiakim, sent orders to all his lieutenants and governors of the respective provinces belonging to his dominions, immediately to march with their forces into Judea, and, without hesitation, lay siege to Jerusalem. These orders were obeyed, and Jehoiakim, for some time, held out with great resolution, till at length, from the great number of parties which had formed a confederacy against him, he was reduced to the necessity of shutting himself up in the city. Here, however, he did not continue long, for the enemy pressing hard, he made a sally in hopes of saving himself, but was taken prisoner, immediately put to death, and his body thrown in the highway, not being allowed even common interment. Thus in the eleventh year of his reign, was completely fulfilled the prophet's prediction concerning this wicked prince: *he shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem* §.

On the death of Jehoiakim, his son Jehoiachin (who is likewise called Coniah) succeeded to the throne; but, in the little time that he continued thereon (which was only three months) persisting in his father's impieties, he drew upon himself a bitter declaration of God's wrath, which was delivered to him by the prophet Jeremiah in these words: *As I live, saith the Lord, though Coniah, the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, wore the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence: And I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, and into the hand*

† Baruch, the son of Neriah, and grandson of Maaseiah, was of an illustrious birth, and of the tribe of Judah. Seraiah, his brother, had a considerable employment in the court of king Zedekiah, but himself kept close to the person of Jeremiah, and was his most faithful disciple, though his adherence to his master drew upon him several persecutions, and a great deal of bad treatment.

The book called Baruch is introduced with an historical preface, wherein it is related, that Baruch, being then at Babylon, did, in the name of the captive king and his people, draw up an epistle, and afterwards read it to them for their approbation; and that, together with it, they sent a collection of money to the high-priest at Jerusalem for the maintenance of the daily sacrifices.

Of the whole of this book there are but three copies; one in Greek, and the other two in Syriac, whereof one agreeth with the Greek, though the other very much differs from it; but in what language it was originally written, or whether one of these be not the original, or which of them may be so, 'tis next to impossible to tell.

‡ What detained him from going in person against Jerusalem we are not told; only it appears, that, in the tenth year of Jehoiakim, he was engaged in an arbitration be-

tween the Medes and Lydians, the occasion of which was this:—After the Medes had recovered all the Upper Asia out of the hands of the Scythians, and again extended their borders to the river Halys, which was the common boundary between them and the Lydians, it was not long before there happened a war between these two nations, which was managed for five years together with various success. In the sixth year, intending to make one battle decisive, they engaged each other with their utmost strength; but, in the midst of the action, and while the fortune of the day seemed to hang in an equal balance between them, there happened an eclipse, which overspread both armies with darkness; whereupon they desisted from fighting, and agreed to refer the controversy to the arbitration of two neighbouring princes. The Lydians chose Siennesis, king of Cilicia; and the Medes, Nebuchadnezzar (who, by Herodotus, lib. i. is called Labynetus) king of Babylon, who concluded a peace between them, on the terms, that Astyages, son of Cyaxares, king of Media, should take to wife Ariana, the daughter of Halysatis, king of the Lydians; of which marriage, within a year after, was born Cyaxares, who is called *Darius the Mede*, in the Book of Daniel.

§ Jer. xxii. 19.

band of them whose face thou fearest, even into the band of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and into the band of the Chaldeans: And I will cast thee out, and thy mother that bore thee, into another country, where ye were not born; and there shall ye die.

It was not long before these threats (owing to Jehoiachin's continuing his impieties) were carried into execution. Within three months after his father's death, Nebuchadnezzar came in person with his royal army to Jerusalem, and immediately caused the place to be attacked with a close siege on every side. Jehoiachin was so terrified at this, that, without making the least attempt to defend himself, he took his mother, his princes, and chief ministers out of the city, and quietly delivered himself and them into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, who, though he thought proper to save his life, sent him, and those who were with him, prisoners to Babylon.

Besides these, Nebuchadnezzar, at this time, carried away with him a prodigious number of other captives, among whom was the prophet Ezekiel. He not only took with him all the mighty men of valour, but likewise all the most useful artificers, to the number of ten thousand men, together with the greatest part of the treasures out of the temple and the royal palace. The people he left in Jerusalem were the poorer sort, over whom he appointed Mattaniah (uncle to Jehoiachin) king. Before he left him, he compelled him to take a solemn oath to be faithful and true in his obedience to the crown of Babylon; and to bind this engagement the stronger, he changed his name to Zedekiah, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies *the Justice of the Lord*; intending thereby to remind him of the vengeance he was to expect, should he violate that fidelity he had so solemnly engaged to preserve.

Though Zedekiah was no stranger to the fate

of his predecessors for their great wickedness against God; yet he followed their evil ways, and daily practised the most horrid impieties. The prophet Jeremiah was sent to admonish him for his conduct, which he did by relating to him a vision of two baskets of figs, the one good and the other bad. By the first he represented the captivity of those that were in Babylon, which being limited to a certain time, was for the good of their posterity. By the latter he represented the condition of Zedekiah, and those that remained in the land of Judah, all of whom the Lord threatened to deliver up to their enemies, and make them a reproach in all places, adding, that the Lord would send among them the sword, pestilence and famine. But these threats made no impression on Zedekiah, who still pursued his wicked courses, and his subjects, following his example, gave themselves up to all manner of licentiousness.

Some time after Zedekiah had been seated on the throne, several princes of the neighbouring nations, viz. the Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, Zidonians, Tyrians, &c. sent their ambassadors to Jerusalem, to congratulate him on his accession; and to propose a league against the king of Babylon, in order to shake off his yoke, and prevent his return into those parts of the country. But this scheme proved abortive, by means of the prophet Jeremiah. The prophet had some time before received Divine orders to make bonds and yokes, and put them about his neck in token of that bondage with which the Lord had threatened Judah, and other nations. On this occasion, by the command of God, he sent bonds and yokes by the ambassadors of those princes who solicited an alliance with Zedekiah to their respective masters, and with them a message to this effect: "That God had given all their countries to the king of Babylon, and therefore their wisest course would be to sub-

"mit

|| Jer. xxii. 24, &c.

Jehoiachin continued in prison till the death of Nebuchadnezzar; but when Evilmerodach, his son, succeeded to the throne, he not only released him from his imprisonment (which had continued thirty-seven years) but treated him with great humanity and respect, allowing him an honourable maintenance, and giving him the precedence of all other princes in Babylon. The prophecy of Jeremiah, however, was amply fulfilled, he spending the remainder of his days in the place of his captivity.

† Nebuchadnezzar carried away the treasures and rich furniture of the temple at three different times: First, in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, when he first took Jerusalem, he carried half of the vessels of the house of God away into the land of Shinar, and put them into the house of his god, Dan. i. 2. These were the vessels which his son Belshazzar profaned, Dan. v. 2. and which Cyrus restored to the Jews, Ezra i. 7. to be set up in the temple again when rebuilt: Secondly, in the reign of Jehoiachin he took the city again, and cut in pieces a great part of the vessels of gold used in the temple service, and which by some chance or other had escaped his former plunder. Thirdly, in the 11th year of Zedekiah, he pillaged the temple once more, when he broke in pieces the pillars of brass, &c. and took along with them all the vessels of silver and gold that he could find, and carried them to Babylon. It is something strange that among all this inventory, no mention is made of the ark of the covenant, which of all other things was held most sacred. But it is very probable that it was burned together with the temple in the last desolation; for what some say of its being hidden by the prophet Jeremiah in a certain cave in mount Nebo, is certainly a mistake.

‡ This vision, with the threats denounced against Zedekiah and his people, is related by the prophet in these words: "One basket had very good figs, even like the figs that are first ripe: and the other basket had very naughty figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad. Then said the Lord unto me, What seest thou, Jeremiah? And I said, figs; the good figs, very good; and the evil, very evil, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil. Again the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel; Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good. For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up. And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart. And as the evil figs, which cannot be eaten, they are so evil; surely thus saith the Lord, So will I give Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes; and the residue of Jerusalem, that remain in this land, and them that dwell in the land of Egypt: and I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them. And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, among them, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them and to their fathers."

“mit to his yoke, which, if they refused to do, both they and their countries should most certainly be destroyed.”

After Jeremiah had sent this message, with the yokes and bonds, to the kings of the Ammonites, &c. he went to Zedekiah, and having persuaded him to submit to the king of Babylon, and not give credit to false prophets, who might flatter him with a deliverance from his power, he prevailed with him not to enter into the league that was proposed.

There were at this time in Jerusalem many false prophets, whose predictions were so pleasing to the people that they paid no attention to the true ones. Among these was one named Hananiah, who had the insolence to take the yoke from off the prophet Jeremiah's neck, and brake it, saying, in the presence of all the people, “Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all nations within the space of two full years ||.”

Jeremiah took this treatment with great patience, and retired; but it was not long before he received orders from God to go to Hananiah with this message: “Go and tell Hananiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Thou hast broken the yokes of wood; but thou shalt make for them yokes of iron. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, I have put a yoke of iron upon the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and they shall serve him: and I have given him the beasts of the field also *.” Jeremiah obeyed the Divine command, and going to Hananiah, addressed him as follows: “Hear now, Hananiah: the Lord hath not sent thee; but thou makest this people to trust in a lye. Therefore thus saith the Lord: Behold, I will cast thee from off the face of the earth: this year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught rebellion against the Lord †.” It was not long before it appeared who was the true prophet, for according to Jeremiah's prediction, Hananiah died within the year.

A short time after this Zedekiah sent ambassadors to Babylon ‡, by whom Jeremiah took the opportunity of transmitting a letter to the chiefs of the Jews then in captivity §, advising them not to be deceived by false prophets ||, who might make them entertain hopes of a speedy restoration: that, by the ordination of God, their captivity was to last seventy years; and that the people left at Jerusalem would be of little use to assist them in their deliverance, because God, in

a short time, would afflict them with sword, pestilence and famine, so that the greatest part of them would be consumed, and the remainder scattered over the face of the earth. He therefore exhorted them to live quietly and peaceably in the country whither they were carried, without expecting any return, until the time which God had appointed.

On the receipt of this letter one Shemaiah, a very popular man among the captive Jews at Babylon, took upon him to write to Zephaniah, the second priest, and to all the priests and people of Jerusalem, representing Jeremiah as a madman, and a mere pretender to prophecy, at the same time advising them to keep him in close confinement.

A short time after Jeremiah was informed of this letter being sent to the priests and chief people of Jerusalem, he received Divine orders to send again to the captives in Babylon, to let them know he would punish Shemaiah and his posterity very severely, for having deluded them with false prophecies; and, at the same time, to convince those that were left in Jerusalem, he shewed them, by the emblem of a potter's vessel **, that it was in the power of the Almighty to destroy what nation or people he pleased. But all this was not productive of the least good: the people still resolved to go on in their wicked ways, and, to avenge themselves of the prophet, who gave them some disturbance therein, they first grossly abused him, then beat him, and at length put him in the stocks.

It was much about this time that Ezekiel was called to the prophetic office; and it is remarkable that he prophesied the like kind of destruction against Jerusalem, as the prophet Jeremiah did against Babylon. At Jerusalem Jeremiah foretold the Divine judgments which were to be executed upon Chaldea and Babylon by the Medes and Persians, which he wrote in a book, and delivered to Seraiah, who was then going upon an embassy to Babylon ††. He gave him instructions to read the contents of the book to his captive brethren on the banks of the river Euphrates; after having done which, to tie a stone to it and throw it into the river, thereby to denote, that as it would naturally sink, so should the Babylonish empire be so totally destroyed as never to rise again.

At Babylon Ezekiel, by several types and prophetic revelations, foretold the taking of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans; Zedekiah's flight from the city by night; the putting out of his eyes; his imprisonment, and death at Babylon; the

|| Jeremiah xxviii. 11.

* Ibid. ——— 13.

† Ibid. ——— 15.

‡ On what occasion Zedekiah sent this embassy to the king of Babylon we are not informed; but it is reasonable to suppose that, as Judea was then tributary to the Babylonians, the king did it out of policy, to keep up a good understanding with them.

§ Ezekiel (who was at this time in Babylon) was not as yet possessed of the spirit of prophecy; and, for this reason, Jeremiah took care of the Jews who were then captives in that land, by sending them instructions in what manner they were to behave, viz. *to seek the peace of the city whither they were carried away*, Jer. xxix. 7.

|| The two persons mentioned in scripture, who took upon

themselves to be prophets sent from God in Babylon were, Ahab, the son of Kolaiah, and Zedekiah, the son of Maaseiah. These two, feeding the people with false promises of a speedy restoration, hindered them from making any settlements in the parts assigned for their residence. But, as the prophet Jeremiah denounced their sudden destruction, so it happened; for Nebuchadnezzar, understanding that they disturbed the people by their vain prophecies, ordered them to be seized and roasted alive; which orders were accordingly executed.

** See Jeremiah xix.

†† The chief business of this embassy was, to request of Nebuchadnezzar a restitution of the sacred vessels of the temple which he had taken away when he carried Jehoiakim captive into Babylon.

the carrying away of the Jews into captivity; the desolation of their country; and the many and great calamities which would befall them for their iniquities. But to such that were in captivity, who, avoiding those iniquities, endeavoured to keep themselves steady and faithful in God's service, God, by the mouth of his prophet, promised to become a sanctuary in a strange country, and to bring them back again unto the land of Israel, where they should flourish in peace and righteousness, and, once more, *become his people, and be their God* †.

Thus did these two great prophets visit the people, endeavouring, both by significant em-

blems, and direct predictions, to reclaim them. The one endeavoured to make those easy under their captivity at Babylon, while the other used every means in his power to make such as were left at Jerusalem lay aside their wickedness and repent. But they still persisted in their obstinacy and disobedience, for which God at length brought on them those calamities he had so often foretold, and so severely threatened, by the mouths of his prophets. But before we relate these particulars we must take notice of a memorable transaction that intervened, which, being rather of a detached nature, we shall reserve in a chapter by itself.

C H A P. XII.

The Siege of Bethulia, with the singular exploit of Judith §, a widow lady, who cut off the head of Holofernes, general of the Assyrian army, and thereby prevented the city from falling into the hands of the enemy.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR, king of Assyria, having been, for some time, at enmity with Arphaxad, king of Media, at length resolved to give him battle. He accordingly marched against him with a considerable body of forces, fully resolved either to reduce him to subjection, or perish in the attempt. Arphaxad made the necessary preparations to oppose his antagonist, and the two armies met in the plains of Ragau, where a desperate battle took place, in which the army of Arphaxad was totally routed and himself slain. Nebuchadnezzar, having been thus successful, prosecuted his enterprize, and after having made himself master of several of the principal cities belonging to Arphaxad (among which was Ecbatane the royal seat of the Median empire) he returned with his forces in great triumph to Nineveh, the place from whence he had set out on this singular expedition.

Nebuchadnezzar had, previous to his engaging in this enterprize, summoned the people of all those countries that were tributary to him to attend on the occasion; but, apprehending that some of them had disobeyed his orders, soon after his return, he enquired of his principal officers, nobles and counsellors who they were that did attend, and who had treated his commands with indignity. On the report being made, it appeared that those who had disregarded his orders were what resided in the different pro-

vinces to the west; upon which Nebuchadnezzar was so irritated, that he determined to chastise them, in the most severe manner, for their disobedience.

In consequence of this resolution Nebuchadnezzar, sending for Holofernes, the chief captain of his army, and next in authority to himself, addressed him as follows: "Behold, said he, thou shalt go forth from my presence, and take with thee men that trust in their own strength, of footmen an hundred and twenty thousand, and the number of horses with their riders twelve thousand. And thou shalt go against all the west country, because they disobeyed my commandment. And thou shalt declare unto them, that they prepare for me earth and water: for I will go forth in my wrath against them, and will cover the whole face of the earth with the feet of mine army, and I will give them for a spoil unto them: So that their slain shall fill their vallies and brooks, and the river shall be filled with their dead till it overflow: and I will lead them captives to the utmost parts of the earth. Thou, therefore, shalt go forth, and take beforehand for me all their coats: and if they will yield themselves unto thee, thou shalt reserve them for me till the day of their punishment. But concerning them that rebel, let not thine eye spare them; but put them to the slaughter, and spoil them wheresoever thou goest. For

as

† Ezekiel xi. 20.

§ The Book of Judith, from whence this history is taken, some modern critics have endeavoured to represent as nothing more than an allegory, though there is not any thing in it that has the air either of fiction or parable. Though the Jews have not placed it among their canonical books, yet they have ever considered it as a true history. Who was the author is unknown, but it is very probable that it was composed during the captivity, because it was written in the Chaldaea tongue. It has been a great dispute among the learned whether the transactions related in this Book took place *before* or *after* the Babylonish captivity. Those who

maintain the latter opinion support their argument from the words of the history itself, wherein the author expressly tells us (chap. iv. 3.) that *the Israelites were newly returned from captivity, and all the people of Judea were lately gathered together, and the vessels, and the altar, and the house were sanctified after their profanation.* But this can mean no more than those who were made captives in the reign of Jehoiakim, for the captivity (at the time Jerusalem was destroyed in the reign of Zedekiah) continued seventy years, before the expiration of which Nebuchadnezzar had quite subdued Arphaxad, king of the Medes, and demolished Ecbatane.

“ as I live, and by the power of my kingdom,
 “ whatsoever I have spoken, that will I do by
 “ mine hand.”

These orders were strictly attended to by Holofernes, who immediately took the field with a prodigious army ||, and having wasted and destroyed several different nations, at length proceeded towards Judea, striking terror into the people wherever he went.

As soon as the Israelites heard what great destruction Holofernes had made, the nations he had conquered, and that he was marching with all haste towards their country, they immediately fortified their towns, gathered together what forces they could, and possessed themselves of the mountains, in order to interrupt the Assyrian general from entering Judea. Holofernes, surprized to think they should attempt to make any opposition against his army, enquired of the Moabites and Ammonites what strength that people had, and what motives could induce them to attempt an opposition: “ Tell me now, said he, who this people is that dwelleth in the hill country, and what are the cities that they inhabit, and what is the multitude of their army, and wherein is their power and strength, and what king is set over them, or captain of their army; and why have they determined not to come and meet me, more than all the inhabitants of the west?” One Achior, a chief man among the Ammonites, gave him a concise history of that nation, and having informed him in what manner they had been sometimes protected, and at other times abandoned by their God, concluded, that if they had offended their God, he would deliver them into his hands; but if they had not, their God would defend them, and all his army would not be able to subdue them.

As soon as Holofernes received this account from Achior, he ordered some of his servants to conduct him to Bethulia, and deliver him into the hands of the Israelites. The servants obeyed their master's orders, but when they came near the city, the inhabitants, knowing them to belong to the Assyrian army, went out to oppose them; upon which they bound Achior, left him at the foot of a hill, and returned to their camp. As soon as the Israelites came up to Achior, they unbound him, and conducted him to the governors of the city, who immediately called an assembly of the people, and placing Achior in the midst, they asked him what he knew relative to the state of the Assyrian army, and what were the intentions of their commander. Achior told them, the army was very considerable, that the commander had spoken with the greatest contempt of the Israelites, and that it was his determined resolution to enter Judea, and put all the inhabitants to the sword. This intelligence struck such an impression on the people, that they immediately fell down and worshipped God, crying out, “ O Lord God of heaven, behold their pride, and pity the low estate of our nation,

“ and look upon the face of those that are sanctified unto thee this day.” Ozias, one of the governors, then conducted Achior to his house, and being accompanied by the elders of the people, they spent the whole night in prayer, beseeching God to interpose in their behalf against so formidable and daring an enemy.

The next day Holofernes marched his army into Judea, and encamped in a valley near Bethulia, intending, with all expedition, to lay siege to the place. The appearance of the Assyrian army struck the inhabitants of Bethulia with the greatest terror, and so pressing were they with Ozias, the head governor, to give up the city, that, to appease them, he promised to comply with their request if they were not relieved within the space of five days. “ Brethren,” said he, be of courage, let us yet endure five days, in the which space the Lord our God may turn his mercy towards us; for he will not forsake us utterly. And if these days pass, and there come no help unto us, I will do according to your word.”

The greatest inconvenience the Israelites laboured under was, the want of water; for otherwise, the town, by reason of its situation, which was on a very lofty hill, was inaccessible. This inconvenience was occasioned by the advice of the Idumeans, who told Holofernes there was no method of reducing the place, but by cutting off the water at the foot of the mountains, from whence the city was supplied with that article. This advice Holofernes pursued, which occasioned Ozias to promise the people he would not attempt to hold out longer than five days, unless he should meet with that relief which would enable him to remove so material an inconvenience.

At this time their dwelt in Bethulia a widow named Judith, who was as eminent for her virtue and piety, as for her great riches, and the distinguished respect with which she was looked upon by the heads of the people. This woman, hearing the engagement Ozias had made with the inhabitants in order to appease them, sent for him, and, in the presence of the principal men of the city, rebuked him for his conduct. Ozias made the best apology he could on the occasion, saying, “ the people were very thirsty, and compelled us to do unto them as we have spoken, and to bring an oath upon ourselves which we cannot break. Therefore now pray thou for us, because thou art a godly woman, and the Lord will send us rain to fill our cisterns, and we shall faint no more.” Judith then addressed herself to them as follows: “ Hear me, and I will do a thing that shall go throughout all generations to the children of our nation. Ye shall stand this night in the gate, and I will go forth with my waiting-woman: and within the days that ye have promised to deliver the city to our enemies, the Lord will visit Israel by mine hand. But enquire not ye of mine act: for I will not declare it unto you, till

|| The author of the Book of Judith has described the strength of the army Holofernes took with him in these words: Holofernes muttered the chosen men for the battle, as his lord had commanded him, unto an hundred and twenty thousand, and

twelve thousand archers on horseback.—A great multitude of sundry countries with them, like locusts, and like the sand of the earth; for the multitude was without number. Judith ii. 15, 20.

"till the things be finished that I do." To this the whole assembly replied, "Go in peace, and the Lord God be before thee, to take vengeance on our enemies."

Judith, after addressing herself in prayer to God for success, made the necessary preparations for carrying her project into execution. She was not insensible of her own personal charms (for she was exceeding handsome as well as virtuous) and from the power of these she flattered herself with being able to accomplish her design of frustrating the intentions of the Assyrian general. To effect this she put on her richest attire, and decorated herself with the most costly ornaments, having done which she left Bethulia, and, accompanied only by a female servant, set out towards the camp of the Assyrians.

When Judith came to the outskirts of the Assyrian camp, the guards stopped her, asking who she was, and from whence she came. She told them she was an Hebrew who had fled from her countrymen, being sensible that their destruction was near at hand; and that she was come to acquaint their general by what means he might make himself master of Bethulia, without the loss of a single man. The guards, struck with the beauty of her person, the grandeur of her dress, and the words which she spoke, immediately conducted her to their general, who received her with all that civility and respect her appearance seemed to demand. Having understood the design of her leaving Bethulia, which she related to Holofernes in the same manner she had done to the guards, he not only promised her his protection, but likewise appointed a proper apartment for the accommodation of her and her maid.

Holofernes was already enamoured with this fair stranger, not only on account of the beauty of her person, but the natural accomplishments of her mind. He ordered his servants to accommodate her in the same manner with himself; to furnish her with the like kind of provision, and to give her such of his wines as she should think proper to accept.

Judith returned thanks to Holofernes for his kind offers and protection, but at the same time requested that, as she was a strict observer of the religion of her country, she might be permitted to eat separately * such provisions as she had brought with her. She likewise desired that she might have leave, without any molestation, to go out of the camp at night, or before it was day, in order to perform her devotions †; both of which requests were readily granted by Holofernes.

Thus did Judith continue in the Assyrian

camp for three days during which she was treated with the greatest respect, and, agreeable to her request, was permitted to go every night into the valley of Bethulia, where she offered up her prayers to God, beseeching him so to direct her, that she might become the preserver of the distressed Israelites. On the fourth day Holofernes made an entertainment for his own domestics only, not inviting any of the officers of the army. On this occasion he sent Bagoas, his eunuch, who had the principal management of his private affairs, to invite Judith to the feast. "Go now, said he, and persuade this Hebrew woman which is with thee, that she come unto us, and eat and drink with us. For, lo, it will be a shame for our person, if we shall let such a person go, not having had her company; for if we draw her not unto us, she will laugh us to scorn." Bagoas obeyed his master's orders, and going to Judith's tent addressed her as follows: "Let not this fair damsel fear to come to my lord, and to be honoured in his presence, and drink wine, and be merry with us, and be made this day as one of the daughters of the Assyrians, which serve in the house of Nebuchadnezzar." Judith replied, "Who am I now, that I should gainsay my lord? Surely whatsoever pleaseth him, I will do speedily, and it shall be my joy unto the day of my death."

As soon as Bagoas left Judith, she immediately dressed herself in her best attire, and, taking her maid with her, went to the tent of Holofernes, who no sooner saw her than his heart was ravished with her appearance, and he resolved, if possible, to possess those enjoyments he had meditated from the moment of his first seeing her. He was so well pleased with her conversation during the repast, and his mind so elated with the thoughts of enjoying her that night, that he gave a thorough loose to indulgence, and at length became so intoxicated with wine that he laid himself down on his bed, and fell fast asleep. Bagoas seeing this, and knowing his master's intentions, dismissed all the company, except Judith (and her maid who waited for her mistress without the tent) and then withdrew himself.

Now was Judith's project ripe for execution. Standing by his bedside, and beholding him dead, as it were with drink, she thus addressed herself to God: "O Lord God of all power (said she) look at this present upon the works of mine hands for the exaltation of Jerusalem. For now is the time to help thine inheritance, and to execute mine enterprizes to the destruction of the enemies which have risen against us." Having said this, she took down a scymitar that hung

* There were several sorts of meats eaten by the heathens, which were prohibited in the laws of Moses, and, therefore, Judith took with her such a quantity of provision as she thought would be sufficient for the time of her absence. Another reason, indeed, may be assigned for this part of her conduct, namely, the fear she was under that something of an intoxicating nature might be given her, so as to make her an easy prey to the lust of Holofernes, who, no doubt, would have first seduced her, and then triumphed over the loss of her virtue.

† As prayers are certainly the most proper to be offered up

in places of retirement, and as the hurry and noise of a camp must be very inconvenient for the performance of religious offices, Judith, who professed herself to be a woman of strict piety, had a good pretence to request of the general the liberty of retiring out of the camp, (when she thought proper and without any questions being asked her) to perform her devotions, which, she foresaw, would be a means of favouring her escape, after she had executed the grand part of her project. And it was certainly from this precaution only that her request of paying her devotion without the camp was founded.

hung by the bed-side, and taking hold of the hair of Holofernes's head with her left hand, said, "Strengthen me, O Lord God of Israel this day." She then struck Holofernes on the neck with all her might, and at the second stroke severed his head from his body.

As soon as Holofernes was dead Judith pulled down the canopy of his bed, and immediately left the tent. His head she gave to her maid who put it into the bag in which they had brought their provisions; and they directly made the best of their way through the camp, not being any ways suspected by the soldiers, who, knowing the indulgence that had been given to Judith, supposed she was going as usual into the valley to pay her evening devotions.

Judith made the best of her way to Bethulia, whither she had no sooner arrived than she hastily called out to the watchmen to open the gate. "Open, open now the gate, said she: God, even our God is with us, to shew his power yet in Jerusalem, and his forces against the enemy, as he hath even done this day." The men, knowing her voice, immediately opened the gates, and no sooner had she entered the city, than the elders and principal people, who heard of her return, being greatly astonished, ran hastily to congratulate her: upon which she addressed herself to them in these words: "Praise, praise God, for he hath not taken away his mercy from the house of Israel, but hath destroyed our enemies by mine hands this night." She then took the head out of the bag, and shewing it to the people, said, "Behold the head of Holofernes the chief captain of the army of the Assyrians, and behold the canopy wherein he did lie in his drunkenness; and the Lord hath smitten him by the hand of a woman. As the Lord liveth, who hath kept me in my way that I went, my countenance hath deceived him to his destruction, and yet hath he not committed sin with me, to defile and shame me."

The people were so struck with the sight of Holofernes's head, that they immediately fell on their faces and worshipped God, saying, with one accord, "Blessed be thou, O our God, which hast this day brought to nought the enemies of thy people." Ozias, the chief governor, particularly addressed himself to Judith in these words: "O daughter, blessed art thou of the most high God above all the women upon the earth; and blessed be the Lord God, which hath created the heavens and the earth, which hath directed thee to the cutting off of the head of the chief of our enemies. For this thy confidence shall not depart from the heart of men, which remember the power of God for ever. And God turn these things to thee for a perpetual praise, to visit thee in good things, because thou hast not spared hazarding thy life for the affliction of our nation, but hast

avenged our ruin, walking a strait way before our God."

Judith, well knowing the consternation into which the sudden death of Holofernes would put the Assyrian army, gave such directions to the Bethulians as she thought necessary in order to take a proper advantage of it. She advised them, as soon as the morning appeared, to hang the head of Holofernes † on the highest part of the walls of the city, and then every one to take up arms, and sally out of the gates, as if they meant to attack the enemy, but, in reality, only to give them an alarm, that thereupon they might have recourse to their general (as she supposed they would) and thereby come to know the fate that had befallen him. That if, after this discovery, they should find the Assyrians appear in confusion, they should immediately advance towards them, and if they found them inclined to retreat, they should pursue them with the utmost expedition, and take every advantage they could; but if on the contrary, they found them likely to stand their ground, they should then for their own safety, retreat to the city.

The Bethulians had sufficient reason strictly to observe the instructions of a woman whose conduct had so far put them in the way for their deliverance. Agreeable to her advice, after having hung up the head of Holofernes on the walls of the city, they armed themselves, and made their appearance in the passes of the mountains. As soon as the out-guards of the Assyrian camp saw them, they immediately gave notice to the officers, who immediately dispatched a messenger with the intelligence to the general. Upon this Bagoas, his eunuch, went to Holofernes's tent, and knocking at the door for some time without receiving any answer, he at length opened it, and went in, where, to his great amazement and surprize, he saw the headless body of his master laying in his blood. Missing Judith, whom he thought had lain with Holofernes that night, he went to her tent, but not finding her there, he immediately judged that she was the author of this mischief and disgrace to the Assyrians.

Information of this event being soon dispersed throughout the camp, the Assyrians were thrown into such confusion, that every one began to shift for himself, and they fled with the utmost precipitation, some into the plains, and others into the hilly parts of the country. The Bethulians (together with other neighbouring people, to whom Ozias had sent intelligence of the death of the Assyrian general) pursued them in small parties from several quarters, and having slain a considerable number, and greatly enriched themselves with the spoils which the enemy had left behind them, they returned in triumph to Bethulia.

The news of this singular deliverance having reached Jerusalem, Joacim the high priest, accompanied

† This advice given by Judith is consistent with many circumstances we meet with in antient history. It was natural for her to imagine, that the Assyrian army would be thrown into great confusion by the unexpected death of their general, and, therefore, nothing could be more consistent

with human policy than the advice she here gave; for it often happens, when the commander in chief is cut off, for the inferior officers to dispute among themselves concerning precedence, and that has frequently occasioned the loss of armies.

accompanied by the elders of the people, went to Bethulia, in order to pay their respectful acknowledgments to the person who had been the chief cause of so remarkable an incident. As soon as they saw Judith they blessed her with one accord, after which Joacim addressed her as follows: "Thou art the exaltation of Jerusalem, thou art the chief glory of Israel, thou art the great rejoicing of our nation: Thou hast done all these things by thine hand: thou hast done much good to Israel, and God is pleased there-with: blessed be thou of the Almighty Lord for evermore". Joacim and the elders then conducted Judith to Jerusalem, she taking with her the canopy of Holofernes's tent, together with all his plate, and other valuable articles which had been presented her by the heads of Bethulia, after the people had returned from plundering the camp of the enemy.

When Judith arrived at Jerusalem, the people received her with an inexpressible satisfaction §, being happy at the sight of a person who had been the means of rescuing their countrymen from the most impending danger. Joacim,

the high-priest, accompanied by the elders, conducted Judith to the temple, where they offered up burnt-offerings, and gave public thanks to God for this singular deliverance from the destructive machinations of their enemies. The oblation presented by Judith consisted of the plunder of Holofernes's tent, which had been presented to her by the soldiers after their return from pursuing the enemy, and possessing themselves of the riches they had left behind them. On this occasion a feast was held in Jerusalem for the space of three months, during which Judith continued in that city; but after the rejoicings were over, she returned to Bethulia, where she lived in great splendor and renown the remainder of her life. She died at the age of 105, greatly lamented by the people, who expressed their grief on the occasion, by mourning for her seven days. Her remains were deposited in the cave of her husband Manasseh, for whose memory she had such a respect, that, after his death, though she had many advantageous and honourable offers, she continued a widow the remainder of her life.

C H A P. XIII.

Zedekiah, king of Judah, enters into a confederacy with the king of Egypt. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Assyria, lays siege to Jerusalem. Ezekiel and Jeremiah prophecy the destruction of that city. Zedekiah, fearful of Nebuchadnezzar's army, pretends to reform, and proclaims a Manumission, or free liberty to all Hebrew servants; but, on the king of Egypt coming to his assistance, he withdraws the proclamation. The prophet Jeremiah is thrown into a dismal dungeon, from whence he is released at the instigation of Elud-Malech, one of the king's eunuchs. Jeremiah's last interview with Zedekiah. The city of Jerusalem taken by Nebuchadnezzar. Zedekiah's sons put to death before his face, himself made a prisoner, and, after having his eyes put out, sent in chains to Babylon. The city of Jerusalem, together with the temple, plundered and burnt. Many of the nobility and priests put to death by order of Nebuchadnezzar. The prophet Jeremiah is treated with great respect, being permitted either to stay in his own country, or go with the rest of the captives to Babylon. He chuses the former, and receives letters of recommendation from Nebuchadnezzar to Gedaliah, who is appointed governor over the people left in the country of Judah.

ZEDEKIAH, king of Judah, having, since the commencement of his reign, (which was now seven years) laboured under the Babylonish yoke, determined, if possible, to shake it off; for which purpose he sent ambassadors to Pharaoh Hophra, king of Egypt, with whom he entered into a confederacy against Nebuchadnezzar, king of Assyria, resolving to make the most vigorous opposition against him, should he endeavour, by force, to make him still his tributary.

As soon as Nebuchadnezzar heard of this conjunction, and the intentions of Zedekiah, he im-

mediately gathered together a very considerable army, obliging all those nations that were subject to him to send a certain number of men properly armed for war. With this formidable army Nebuchadnezzar marched into Judea, fully resolved to punish Zedekiah for his perfidy and rebellion. Having in the course of two years over-ran the country, and taken most of the principal cities, he at length, in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign (in the tenth month of the year and on the tenth day of the month) came before Jerusalem, and blocked it up so close on every side, that the inhabitants could not get out,

§ The joy which the people expressed on Judith's entry into Jerusalem, is thus related: *Then all the women of Israel ran together to see her, and blessed her, and made a dance among them for her; and she took branches in her hand, and gave also to the women that were with her, and they put a garland of*

olive upon her, and on her maid that was with her, and she went before all the people in the dance, leading the women, and all the men of Israel followed with garlands, and with songs in their mouth. Judith xv. 12, 13.

out, the consequence of which was, that, in the course of time their provisions were expended, a famine ensued, and the most distressed scene appeared in the streets of Jerusalem.

It is remarkable, that on the very day that Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem the prophet Ezekiel (then a captive in Chaldea) had it revealed to him, by the type of a boiling pot, what destruction should befall the city of Jerusalem; all which happened in direct conformity to the revelation he had received.

After the siege at Jerusalem had some time commenced, the prophet Jeremiah was ordered to inform the king, that the Babylonians, notwithstanding all the opposition they could make, and all the assistance he could obtain, would certainly take it, and destroy it by fire; and that himself should be carried prisoner to Babylon, and finish his days in captivity.

This intelligence, added to the dread of Nebuchadnezzar's army, wrought such an impression on the minds of Zedekiah, and the chief people about him, that they entered into a solemn covenant, from thenceforward, strictly to obey the laws of God, and to lay aside that idolatry and wickedness to which they had been so long accustomed. In consequence of this resolution Zedekiah proclaimed a manumission, or free liberty to all Hebrew servants of either sex, according to what the law enjoined. See Deut. xv. 12, &c. But this indulgence was of short duration. Hophra, king of Egypt, coming to the assistance of Zedekiah, Nebuchadnezzar raised the siege, and marched with his army in order to give him battle. In consequence of this the king, thinking the Assyrians were gone for good and all, repented of the covenant he had made, and the proclamation he had issued for the liberty of his subjects; and therefore commanded every servant, both male and female, to return to their servitudes.

This base prevarication was so offensive to God, that he ordered the prophet Jeremiah to repeat his former judgments of sword, pestilence and famine, on all the people of Jerusalem and Judah; and that he would execute his wrath upon them to their utter destruction.

In consequence of these threats Zedekiah sent several times to Jeremiah, requesting him to pray to God in behalf of himself and his people. The answers returned by the prophet were always positive, and to the same effect; namely, that the Egyptians, in whom he placed so much confidence, would certainly deceive him: that their army would return without giving him any assistance; and that the Assyrians would thereupon renew the siege, take the city, and, together with the temple, destroy it by fire.

While the Assyrians were gone to engage the army of the Egyptians, Jeremiah thought it a proper time to leave Jerusalem, and retire to Anathoth, the place of his nativity, by means of which he might avoid the consequences which he

knew would follow after Nebuchadnezzar should resume the siege of Jerusalem. He accordingly left his abode in the city, in order to retire to the place intended; but when he came to pass the gate he was interrupted by the captain of the guard, who seized him as a deserter, and carrying him before the princes, they were so enraged, that they first beat him, and afterwards committed him to the common jail of the city.

During these transactions the Egyptians (on whom Zedekiah had placed so much dependence) not daring to engage the army of the Assyrians, fled before them into their own country, leaving the deluded king and his people, with their unequal strength, to contend with Nebuchadnezzar, who returned, more exasperated than ever, to re-invest the city of Jerusalem.

Zedekiah began now to be seriously alarmed, knowing the power he had of himself to be very unequal to combat with the formidable army of Nebuchadnezzar. In the midst of his anxiety he sent messengers to Jeremiah, who was then in prison, to know what would be the issue of the war: to which the prophet returned him an answer to this effect: "That God, being highly provoked against him and his people, for their manifold iniquities, would fight against the city, and smite it; that both he and his people should be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon; that those who continued in the city during the siege should perish by the pestilence, by the sword, and by famine; but that those who endeavoured to escape, though they fell into the hands of the Assyrians, should have their lives preserved."

When the princes and chief commanders heard this answer they were so enraged that they went immediately to the king, and earnestly pressed him severely to punish Jeremiah, for that such speeches would certainly discourage the soldiers and people, and in a short time produce a general defection. The king, not knowing what to do in this critical conjuncture of affairs, delivered him into their hands, and they, with unrelenting cruelty, ordered him to be thrown into a filthy dungeon. In this shocking place the prophet must have inevitably perished, had it not been for Ebed-Melech, one of the king's eunuchs, and a particular favourite with him. By the intercession of this person, the prophet was soon released from his lamentable situation, and carried back to the prison in which he had been before confined; and for this interposition he gave Ebed-Melech assurance from God that, on the sacking of the city, he should not be one among those who should fall by the sword.

The Assyrians now pressing the siege with the greatest vigor, Zedekiah, who had yet hopes of receiving some consolation from the prophet Jeremiah, desired to have a private conference with him. Accordingly messengers were dispatched to bring him out of prison, which being done, the king took him to a private apartment in the temple,

|| It is the opinion of some, that, when Jeremiah was in this dismal place, he made those mournful expressions which are set down in the third chapter of the Lamentations. *They have cut off my life in the dungeon, and cast a stone*

upon me.—I called upon thy name, O Lord, out of the low dungeon, and thou hast heard my voice, &c. ver. 53, 55, 56.

temple, and there asked him several questions, particularly what he thought would be the fate of the war. But the prophet could give him no other answer to his questions than what he had done before; only he advised him to surrender to the enemy, as the best expedient he could take, to save both himself and the city. Though the prophet urged the king, in the strongest terms, to take his advice, yet he would by no means assent to it. He therefore broke off the discourse, and after enjoining him to preserve secrecy * in what had passed between them, remanded him to prison. And this was the last interview the prophet ever had with the king.

The siege of Jerusalem, which had been in hand near two years, began now to draw to a conclusion. The inhabitants were reduced to such distress through the scarcity of provisions that they were forced to rake the very dunghills for food, and at length to feed on each other †. In this dreadful situation did they continue for some time, when, in the night of the ninth day of the fourth month, and in the eleventh year of Zedekiah's reign, the city was taken by storm, and every place filled with blood and slaughter. The king, accompanied by some of his friends, endeavoured to make his escape towards the wilderness; but they had not gone far before they were taken and conducted to Nebuchadnezzar, who was then at Riblah. After severely reproaching ‡ Zedekiah for his base perfidy, Nebuchadnezzar ordered his sons to be put to death before his face, as also those princes who had been the means of persecuting the prophet Jeremiah. As for the king himself Nebuchadnezzar commanded his eyes to be put out, and then binding him in fetters of brass, sent him to Babylon, where he finished his days in a loathsome prison. Thus was fully accomplished what the two prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel had foretold concerning this wicked prince §, whose enormities were so great as to bring down on him that Divine vengeance he so justly merited.

Nebuchadnezzar, having thus punished Zedekiah, sent Nebuzaradan, the captain of his guards, to Jerusalem, with orders to raze the place, plunder the temple, and carry the people who were left captives to Babylon. These

orders were executed with the utmost rigour; for Nebuzaradan, having taken all the vessels out of the temple, and gathered together all the riches he could find either in the king's palace or in the houses of the princes and nobility, he set both the temple and city on fire, overthrew all the walls, fortresses and towns belonging to it, and, in short, made the whole one continued scene of desolation ||.

Nebuzaradan, having thus destroyed the city and temple, made all the people he found in the place captives. The heads of those which were about seventy in number, among whom were Saraiiah the high-priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, he carried to Riblah, where Nebuchadnezzar ordered them all to be immediately put to death. The poorer and labouring part of the people, such as could till the ground, and dress the vineyards, he left behind, and made Gedaliah * their governor. All the rest he carried to Babylon, except the prophet Jeremiah, of whom Nebuchadnezzar had given him strict charge to take particular care. He therefore not only took him out of prison when he first came to Jerusalem, but, as the rest were on their departure, gave him his choice, whether he would go with him to Babylon, where he should be maintained at the king's expence, or continue in his own country. The prophet chose the latter, upon which Nebuzaradan not only dismissed him with an handsome present, but likewise gave him letters of recommendation to Gedaliah the governor, in which he strictly enjoined that he should treat him with the most distinguished respect.

Thus was an end put to the Israelitish monarchy, after it had continued four hundred and sixty-eight years from the time that David began to reign over it; three hundred and eighty-eight years from the revolt of the ten tribes; and one hundred and thirty-four years from the extinction of the Israelitish common wealth.

We shall close this chapter and book with some observations and general reflections on the natural causes of the Babylonish captivity; and point out the great wisdom of Providence in directing such a dispensation.

The whole Jewish nation, both Judah and Israel,

* It was necessary for Jeremiah to keep what had passed between him and the king a secret for his own sake; for, if the princes had known it, they would have been so enraged against him that they might have instantly caused him to be put to death.

† See Lamentations iv. 4, 5. and Ezekiel v. 10.

‡ The words Josephus puts into Nebuchadnezzar's mouth, when reproaching Zedekiah for his perfidy, are to this effect: "Did you not promise me (said he) to manage the power and authority that I put you in possession of for my advantage and behalf? And am not I well requited, do you think, for making you a king in your nephew Jehoiah's place, by your employing the credit and interest that I gave you, to the ruin of your patron and benefactor? But that God is great and just, who, for the punishment of your treachery and ingratitude, hath now made you my prisoner."

§ The prophecy of Jeremiah is delivered in these words: *He shall be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him mouth to mouth, and his eyes shall behold his eyes*, chap. xxxii. 4. Ezekiel's prophecy is thus expressed: *I will bring him to Babylon, to the land of the Chaldeans, yet shall he not see it, though he die there*, Chap. xii.

13. Both of these prophecies were literally accomplished; for Zedekiah was carried to Riblah, where he saw the king of Babylon, and spake to him, and beheld his children executed; but had afterwards his eyes put out, and was then carried to Babylon, where he was incapable of seeing the city, because he had lost his eye-sight.

|| On these two sad occasions, viz. the taking of the city, and destruction of the temple, Jeremiah composed a mournful poem, which is called his Lamentations. In the two first chapters he describes the calamities of the siege; in the third he deplores the persecutions which himself had suffered; in the fourth he bemoans the fate of the city and temple, and Zedekiah's sad misfortune; and in the fifth, he addresses his prayer to God in behalf of his brethren, the Jews, under their dispersion and captivity.

* Gedaliah was the son of Ahikam, the great friend of Jeremiah; and it is not unlikely that, by the prophet's advice, who exhorted all, both king and people, to surrender themselves to the Assyrians (Jer. xxxviii. 5, 17.) he made his escape from the city, and went over to the king of Babylon; and for this reason was promoted to the government of Judea.

Israel, had all along a strong and strange propensity to idolatry; and their morals were as corrupt as their religion. What their peculiar temptations were, we know not; but all the endeavours of those who were good kings; and all the preaching of holy prophets, sent by special commission from God, were ineffectual to produce a reformation †. They were therefore carried away captive into Babylon. This dreadful calamity came upon them gradually; but gradual punishment effected no amendment in the religion or morals of the nation. Zedekiah, the last king, was as bad as his predecessors; therefore the whole land of Judea was reduced to utter desolation for the sins of the people.

The great propriety of this dispensation will be seen, if we attend to the following reflections:

1. The lenity of God evidently appeared in his bringing this terrible overthrow upon them so gradually, after a succession of judgments, from less to greater, for a long space of time; which should have been a warning to them, and by experience have convinced them, that the threatenings denounced by the prophets would certainly come to pass.

2. That it was a just punishment for their sins, particularly for their idolatry, whereby they forsook God, and therefore God justly forsook them, and delivered them into the hands of their enemies, as Moses had foretold. Levit xxvi. 30—36.

3. This dreadful calamity was, no doubt, inflicted by Providence as the most effectual means of working their reformation. In their captive disconsolate state they had time, and their calamities had a natural tendency to give them a disposition, to reflect on the long series of iniquity and perverseness which had brought them under the heaviest of God's judgments. Now *their own wickedness corrected them, and their backslidings reprov'd them; now they must know and see that it was an evil thing and bitter, that they had forsaken the Lord their God, and that his fear had not been in them.* In the land of their captivity the discourses of the prophets, declaiming with the highest authority against their profane and wicked practices, would be still sounding in their ears, and their abject, wretched condition, the consequence of such practices would sink deep into their hearts, and surely give them an

utter detestation of what they too well knew was the cause of all their sufferings.

4. The law of God, written by Moses, as the rule of their conduct in all affairs both civil and religious, and the ground of their happiness, they had so far neglected, that it was almost unknown and lost among them ‡. This contempt of the Divine law the prophets had frequently protested against §, and publicly declared, that it would be their destruction. And, in their ruined state, this must be remembered as the primary reason of all their sufferings; and they must be thoroughly sensible that a due regard to the love of God was the only way to recover his favour, and their own prosperity, and accordingly must be disposed to be attentive to it; which, indeed, was the case. This was another good effect of this dispensation, and may be justly given as one grand reason for their being so strongly fixed against idolatry ever after the Babylonish captivity.

5. This dispensation was also calculated to produce good effects among the different nations into which they were carried captives: for, wherever they were dispersed in the eastern countries, they would endeavour to propagate the knowledge of the true God, which was now seriously impressed upon their hearts. During their captivity Divine Providence, by many signal instances of his interposition, which were published and known over all the vast extent of the eastern empire, raised some of them to the highest posts of dignity and power in the courts of Assyria and Persia ||, and the most haughty monarchs openly confessed the living and true God as the only and Supreme Being *, and made decrees, which were published throughout their spacious dominions, that the people should profess and worship him alone †.

From these observations and reflections it is evidently clear, that the Jews (notwithstanding their depravity in their own country) during the captivity of seventy years, must have been a burning and shining light all over the eastern countries. And thus, in this dispensation, God, the father and governor of the world, was working for the reformation and improvement of mankind, in bringing about that which is the true excellency of their nature, and the only foundation of all their happiness.

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† See 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14.

‡ See 2 Kings xxii. 8—12.

§ See Isaiah v. 24. xxx. 5. Jeremiah vi, 19 viii. 5. ix. 13. Hosea viii. 12. Amos ii 4. and in many other places

in the books of the prophets.

|| Dan. i. 19. 20.

* Ibid. ii. 47—49. iv. 34, &c.

† Ibid. iii. 29. vi. 25, &c.

— And laid him in
a Manger. &c. &c. —
LUKE II. 7.



Rosa pinx.

Collyer sculp.

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[Including a Period of 588 Years.]

C H A P. I.

Gedaliah, who was appointed governor of Judea after the reduction of Jerusalem and the captivity of the people, takes up his residence at Mizpah. Ishmael, the son of Netaniah, a person of royal descent, forms a conspiracy against him, and kills him. He likewise puts to death the greater part of the Jews and Chaldeans in Mizpah, together with fourscore Israelites, who were going into the town to offer presents to Gedaliah. Being fearful that his cruelty will be revenged by the captains of Judah, he flies for security into the land of the Ammonites. The Jews who are left after his escape retreat, contrary to the advice of Jeremiah, whom they take with them, into Egypt. They fall into idolatry, for which the prophet severely reproves them. Account of the farther prophecies both of Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

WE have observed, towards the close of the last Book, that Nebuzaradan, the captain-general of Nebuchadnezzar's forces, after destroying the city and temple of Jerusalem, appointed Gedaliah governor over those whom he left behind to till and cultivate the country. In consequence of this Gedaliah took up his residence at Mizpah *, to which place the prophet Jeremiah, accompanied by his servant Baruch, repaired, and was treated by the governor with that respect which was consistent with the recommendations he received from Nebuzaradan, previous to his departure for Babylon.

Soon after the departure of the Assyrians, all those Jews who had, during the siege, fled from the city, and secreted themselves, some among the neighbouring nations, and others in the fields and deserts of their own country, hearing that Gedaliah was made governor of the land, resorted unto him at Mizpah. Among these were Ishmael, the son of Netaniah, Johanan, the son of Kareah, and two others named Jaazaniah and Seraiah, all considerable men, and who had, before the reduction of Jerusalem, held lucrative posts in the army. On their arrival at Mizpah, Gedaliah, the governor, treated them with very great respect, and, in the most friendly manner, advised

* Mizpah was situated on the east side of the river Jordan, and in the division of the land fell to the tribe of Dan; and here it was that Gedaliah either chose to fix his habitation, or, perhaps, was ordered to fix it, because it

lay nearer than any other place to Babylon, from whence he was to receive his instructions with respect to the administration of the government.

advised them to continue in their own country, and content themselves with being subject to the king of Babylon. ~~Fear not, said he, to be the servants of the Chaldees: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you.~~ He then desired them to fix on such places as they thought proper for their residence, and offered them the assistance of his own people to fit up their dwellings.

Ishmael, as well as the other three, appeared perfectly satisfied with the offers made by Gedaliah, and the former particularly expressed himself in the most thankful terms; but his behaviour was all a deception, and his design in going to Mizpah was of the most base and treacherous nature. Being of the blood-royal, he thought, after the departure of the Assyrians, to make himself king of Judea, and had therefore resolved to kill Gedaliah, and seize on the government; in which horrid plot he was assisted by Baalis, king of the Ammonites, under whose protection he had continued during the siege of Jerusalem.

Though Ishmael carried on his base design with the greatest privacy, yet, from the intercourse that took place between him and his confederate the king of the Ammonites, the plot was at length discovered by Johanan, who immediately gave intelligence of it to the governor, at the same desiring that he might have permission to put him to death, and thereby prevent his perfidious design being carried into execution. *Let me go, I pray thee, said he, and I will slay Ishmael the son of Netaniah, and no man shall know it: wherefore should he slay thee, that all the Jews which are gathered unto thee should be scattered, and the remnant of Judah perish?*

Gedaliah, being a man of a generous temper, and not apt to entertain jealousies of others, was unwilling to give credit to what Johanan had related. He told him he thought it impossible that any man could so far deviate from all sense of moral obligation as to seek the destruction of his preserver; and that even if that was the case, he would not so far violate the laws of hospitality as to take away the life of a man who had sheltered himself under his protection. Gedaliah, therefore, took no notice of Johanan's information, but continued the same friendly correspondence with Ishmael he had done ever since his arrival at Mizpah.

About a month after this Gedaliah made a grand entertainment, to which he invited many of the principal people of the city, among whom were Ishmael, and ten of his companions who had engaged with him in conspiring against the life of Gedaliah. This was the most favourable opportunity that could have offered for Ishmael to carry his horrid and base design into execution; nor did he fail taking advantage of it. In the midst of the entertainment he and his

companions (having provided themselves with arms for the purpose) suddenly arose from the table, and falling on Gedaliah, ~~not only putting him~~ to death, but likewise all that were present. They then sallied into the streets, murdered great numbers of the people, as well Chaldeans as Jews, and made the rest captives. The second day after these horrid transactions took place, it happened that a party of fourscore men, from different parts of the country, came to Mizpah, in order to offer presents to Gedaliah, in acknowledgment of their subjection to his government. Ishmael, being apprized of their arrival went, accompanied by his companions, some way from Mizpah to meet them, which he had no sooner done than he offered to conduct them to the governor's house. This offer was readily accepted; but no sooner had they got into the city than Ishmael and his companions fell on them, and put no less than seventy to the sword. The other ten were spared, in consequence of their promising to deliver to Ishmael a great quantity of treasures † they had concealed in a field not far from Mizpah.

Ishmael, after these horrid massacres, not thinking himself secure at Mizpah, left it, taking with him all those he had made captives (among whom were the daughters of king Hezekiah) and proceeded towards the land of the Ammonites, intending again to take shelter under the protection of Baalis, their king, who had urged him on to the undertaking of the late treacherous enterprize against Gedaliah.

In the mean time Johanan, and the rest of the captains of Judah, having heard of the horrid deeds committed by Ishmael at Mizpah, and that he had fled, gathered together their forces, and marching in pursuit of him, overtook him at the fountain of Gibeon. As soon as the captives who were with him saw Johanan, they immediately ran to the pursuers, while Ishmael, with only eight men, made his escape into the land of the Ammonites.

The people being thus left under the care and protection of Johanan and the rest of the captains, they, reflecting on what Ishmael had done in murdering Gedaliah, were apprehensive that the Chaldeans might possibly revenge his death upon them. To provide, therefore, against the worst, they retired with them to Chimham ‡, from whence, should they be called to an account, they might the more easily make their escape into Egypt, whither they had some thoughts of taking up their residence.

The prophet Jeremiah, with his faithful servant Baruch, were among those whom Ishmael the Conspirator had carried away captives from Mizpah, and who accompanied Johanan, and the rest of his countrymen, to their new habitation at Chimham. They had not been long here before Johanan, and the other princes of the people,

† According to the scripture phrase treasures signify any thing hid, or kept in reserve, whether gold, silver, corn, wine, oil, apparel, or any other thing: and, among the people of the east, it was an usual thing to bury their corn, and other provisions in deep holes and caverns, which they dug and filled up so very dexterously, that no one could perceive the earth had been moved, nor could any find them

out but those who made them.

‡ This was the place which king David gave, near five hundred years back, to Chimham, the son of old Barzilai the Gileadite, and which still retained his name. It was in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem, about two leagues from Jerusalem, and at a much greater distance from Babylon than the city of Mizpah.

people, went in a body to Jeremiah, requesting that he would consult the Lord concerning their intended journey into Egypt; at the same time assuring him that they would readily comply with whatever he should think fit to enjoin them. "Let, we beseech thee (said they) our supplication be accepted before thee, and pray for us unto the Lord thy God, even for all this remnant: for we are left but a few of many, as thine eyes do behold us: that the Lord thy God may show us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do. Whether it be good, or whether it be evil, we will obey the voice of the Lord our God, to whom we send thee; that it may be well with us, when we obey the voice of the Lord our God."

Jeremiah promised to comply with their request, and at the expiration of ten days, calling together not only Johanan and the rest of the captains, but likewise the whole multitude, he addressed them as follows: "Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, unto whom ye sent me to present your supplication before him: If ye will still abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull you down, and I will plant you, and not pluck you up. Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, saith the Lord, for I am with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand: and I will shew mercies unto you, that he may have mercy upon you, and cause you to return to your own land. But if ye say, We will not dwell in this land, neither obey the voice of the Lord, saying, No; but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet nor have hunger of bread, and there will we dwell: Then it shall come to pass, that the sword which ye feared shall overtake ye in the land of Egypt, and the famine whereof ye were afraid shall follow close after you there in Egypt; and there ye shall die. So shall it be with all the men that set their faces to go into Egypt to sojourn there: they shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence; and none of them shall remain or escape from the evil that I shall bring upon them."

This message, notwithstanding the professions

the people had made of strictly abiding by what Jeremiah should direct, was treated with the utmost contempt; and Johanan, with the rest of the captains, accused him of having been influenced, by his servant Baruch, to deliver such orders. In short, they were ultimately bent on going to Egypt; and therefore, taking all the remnant of Judah, men, women and children, the king's daughters, Jeremiah the prophet, and Baruch his servant and scribe, with them, they went and settled in the country of the Egyptians §, where they continued till those judgments which God, by the mouth of his prophet, had threatened, came upon them for their obstinacy and disobedience.

No sooner had the Jews settled themselves in Egypt, than (notwithstanding the punishments that had been denounced and inflicted on them for their impieties) they gave themselves up wholly to idolatry, worshipping the moon and other false deities of the land. The prophet Jeremiah remonstrated with them on the impropriety of their conduct, and pointed out to them the dreadful consequences that must infallibly ensue should they persevere in their impieties. But all these remonstrances were of none effect; upon which the prophet received orders from God to denounce on them, in the most express terms, the severest judgments, and at the same time to tell them, that the king of Egypt (under whose protection they vainly thought themselves secure) should be delivered into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, in the same manner as had been Zedekiah their late king. The abandoned Jews paid not the least attention to these alarming denunciations, but continued their idolatrous practices till the prediction of Jeremiah was strictly fulfilled, which happened about eighteen years after it was delivered.

From the time this prediction was denounced we have but few farther particulars either with respect to the prophet Jeremiah ||, or his contemporary Ezekiel *. They both, no doubt, continued in their prophetic offices till their deaths; but when, or where, that happened, or whether natural or untimely, the scripture is silent, and tradition is uncertain. This, however, we may learn

§ The places in which the Jews are said to have settled themselves in Egypt at this time were, Migdol, Tarpanhes, Noph, and the country of Pathros. See Jer. xlv. 1. Migdol is the same place in Egypt which Moses makes mention of (Exod. xiv. 2.) over-against Baal-zephon, not far from the Red Sea. Tarpanhes is Daphne, not far from Pelusium, the first city in Egypt in the road from Judea. Noph is Memphis, situate above the parting of the Nile, or where the Delta begins, and not a little famous for its pyramids; and the country of Pathros is the same with Thebais, or the Upper Egypt, so called from the city of Thebes, which was the first capital in the country.

|| St. Jerome, (in his life of the prophet Jeremiah) and Dorotheus (in his Synopsis of the lives and deaths of the prophets and apostles) tell us that he was stoned to death in Egypt by his own renegade countrymen the Jews, for preaching against their idolatry. It appears, indeed, from the account we have of their behaviour (Jer. xlv. 16.) that they were bent both against him and his reproofs; and therefore it is the more likely that they were the authors of his death than, as some say, the Egyptians were, for his prophesying against him and his king. For the Egyptians (according to the same tradition) having, by the prophet's prayers, been freed from the crocodiles, which very much

infested them, held him in such great honour and esteem, that, in testimony thereof, they buried him in one of their royal sepulchres. The truth is, Jeremiah was, all his lifetime, exposed to the ill-treatment of the Jews, whose irregularities and sad apostacy he was always reproofing; and therefore the author of the book of Ecclesiasticus, in the encomium which he gives of this prophet, seems to draw his character from the persecutions he suffered: *they intreated him evil, who nevertheless, was a prophet.* Ecclesi. xix. 7.

* With respect to the prophet Ezekiel, St. Jerome tells us, that he was put to death by a prince of the children of Israel, whom he reproofed for his idolatry; but who this prince was we are not informed. He was buried, as some say, in the same cave wherein Shem and Arphaxad were deposited on the banks of the Euphrates; but Benjamin of Tudela (in his travels) tells us, that, at some leagues from Bagdat, he saw a magnificent mausoleum, which was said to be the tomb of this prophet, on the top of which was a famous library, wherein was the original of the prophet's prediction, written with his own hand; and that not only the Jews, but the Persians, Medes, and many of the Musselmens made this a place of devotion, and came thither to make their presents and perform their vows.

learn from their own writings, that, after they had discharged their duty to their own people the Jews, they received Divine directions to address the rest of their predictions to the Gentiles. Accordingly we find Jeremiah prophesying against Egypt in the 46th chapter; against all the Philistines, in the 47th; against the Ammonites, Edomites, and other people, in the 49th; and against Babylon in the 50th and 51st; with some promises, here and there interspersed, concerning the redemption of Israel.

In like manner we find Ezekiel prophesying

against the Ammonites in the 25th chapter; against the Tyrians, and those that traded with them in the 26th and 27th; against the prince of Tyre in the 28th; against Egypt in the 29th, 30th, 31st, and 32d; against the shepherds of Israel in the 35th; and against the enemies of the church of God, under the names of Gog and Magog, in the 38th and 39th; with promises of a restoration to his captive countrymen, as a sure confirmation of which, by way of conclusion, he gives a long description of the rebuilding the temple and city of Jerusalem.

C H A P. II.

Daniel, with his three friends, Hananiab, Misbael, and Azariab, are distinguished for their proficiency in learning at Babylon, whither they were carried captives by Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel tells the king his dream, and the interpretation thereof. His three friends are thrown into a fiery furnace for refusing to worship an image set up by Nebuchadnezzar. They are miraculously delivered without receiving the least hurt, and afterwards advanced to great honours by the king. Nebuchadnezzar conquers Egypt, and destroys many of the Jews who had retreated thither after the murder of Gedaliah, governor of Judea, making the rest his captives, and carrying them to Babylon. He has another remarkable dream which is interpreted by Daniel. He grows proud and arrogant, for which he undergoes a most remarkable punishment, being deprived of his senses, and reduced to the condition of a beast. He continues in this state for seven years, at the expiration of which he is restored to his senses, and reinstated in his former majesty. His death and character.

AMONG the captives carried away by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, after the first time of his reducing Jerusalem to the reign of king Jehoiakim, were many youths of the first distinction, whom the conqueror, in consequence of their great natural abilities, kept in his palace, and employed proper people to make them thoroughly acquainted with the language and learning of the Chaldeans. The most conspicuous among these were, Daniel (who was descended from the royal family of David) and three of his very intimate friends, named, Hananiah, Misbael, and Azariah. As it was the custom among conquerors to change the names of their captives, especially when they were to serve in any capacity about the court, so Aspenaz, master of the eunuchs, by order of Nebuchadnezzar, changed the names of these four as follows: Daniel was called Belteshazzar; Hananiah, Shadrach; Misbael, Meshech; and Azariah, Abednego.

These four captives, having peculiar abilities to above the rest, were instructed in all the learning of the Chaldeans, and orders were given that they should have a daily allowance of meat and wine from the king's table. But Daniel, being a devout observer of the religion of his country, desired of the chief eunuch that he and his friends might be excused from that indulgence, and that, instead thereof, they might have only pulse and water for their sustenance. Melzar (for that was the name of the chief eunuch) thinking such indifferent diet would make them not look so well as those who lived on better food, objected

to his request, fearful that, in consequence thereof, he should receive anger from the king his master. Daniel besought him to indulge them with the trial for ten days only, which being granted, Melzar's fears were removed, for at the expiration of the time they appeared hearty and well, in consequence of which they were permitted to continue the diet which Daniel had so earnestly requested.

This religious abstinence recommended Daniel and his companions to the more immediate care and protection of God, who, whilst they were following their studies in the arts and sciences of the Chaldeans, was pleased to furnish them with such understanding and knowledge, that when, at the end of three years, they were brought before the king, he found them by far to excel in wisdom all the magicians and astrologers of his country; but more especially Daniel, to whom God was pleased to impart a most singular knowledge in the understanding and interpretation of dreams.

It was not long before Daniel had an opportunity of displaying the great powers which had been so providentially bestowed on him, in preference to his companions. It happened one night that king Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, which so strongly impressed his mind as to make him exceeding uneasy; and what contributed to his perplexity was, that he could not recollect the substance of it. To assist his memory in this particular, he summoned together all his wise men (especially those who made pretensions to the knowledge or art of divination) demand-

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ing them to tell him the substance of his dream and the interpretation thereof. They answered, that the interpretation they could very readily tell, if they knew what he had dreamt, but as to the dream itself to tell that was impossible: This threw the king into a most violent rage; and he threatened both them and their families with destruction if they did not make known to him his dream. But they still persisted in their inability to perform what he demanded, telling him that it was the province of a deity, and not of man, so to divine, and that no king had ever demanded so unreasonable a request. This answer farther irritated the king, who immediately gave orders that all the wise men in Babylon, without exception, should be put to death.

As soon as Daniel understood the cause of this dreadful decree, in which he knew himself and his companions to be included, he immediately repaired to Arioch, the captain of the king's guards, requesting a respite from the execution of it, and that he would, in the mean time conduct him to the king. This request being complied with, Daniel begged of Nebuchadnezzar that he would for a short time, suspend the execution of his decree, during which he did not in the least doubt but he should give him full satisfaction both as to his dream and the interpretation thereof.

Nebuchadnezzar, having complied with Daniel's request, he immediately went home, and related the whole matter to his three companions, beseeching them to join in prayer with him to God that he would be pleased to reveal to him this great and important secret, whereby not only their lives, but also those of all the wise men in Babylon, might be saved. The prayers of Daniel and his companions were heard, for that very night Daniel received in a vision a full revelation of the king's dream; upon which, when he awoke, he addressed himself to God as follows: *Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: he revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.*

Early the next morning Daniel went to Arioch, the captain of the guards, and told him he had found out the king's dream, desiring him at the same time to conduct him into his pre-

sence. Arioch (happy in this intelligence, and pleased with the thoughts of avoiding the execution of the king's decree) readily complied with Daniel's request, and conducted him to the palace. As soon as Nebuchadnezzar saw Daniel, he asked him if he could make known to him his dream and the interpretation thereof. To which Daniel replied, *the secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king: but there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days.* He then related the dream itself, which he described in words to this effect †: "You saw (said he) O king, an image of a vast dimension, excellent in brightness, but terrible in aspect. The head of this image was of fine gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet partly iron and partly clay. You saw likewise, O king, a stone cut out of the mountain, but from whence it came you knew not. This stone, falling upon the feet of the image, broke it in pieces, and then the rest of the image mouldered into dust, which the wind dispersed, so that it was no more to be seen; but the stone, which, in this manner, destroyed the image, increased to a great mountain, and filled the earth."

Daniel, having thus related the dream, next proceeded to give the interpretation of it, which he did in words to this effect: "You, who are supreme above other kings, and to whom the God of heaven hath given power, and strength, and glory, are signified by the head of gold. After you another kingdom shall arise, but as inferior to yours as silver is to gold: after that there shall arise a third kingdom, emblemized by brass, which shall govern the earth; but the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, and vanquish all the rest. And whereas the feet were partly iron and partly clay, this kingdom shall be divided; part of it shall be strong, and part weak, as clay and iron cannot be solidly mixed together. But in the times of these empires the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom (signified by the stone) which shall never be destroyed: that kingdom shall not be left to another people; but it shall prosper and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall last for ever. And whereas you saw that the stone which broke the image in pieces was cut out of the mountains without hands, the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter; for the dream is true, and the interpretation of it certain ‡."

Nebuchadnezzar was so astonished at this wonderful discovery of his dream, and the interpretation

† Josephus makes Daniel introduce the king's dream, and the interpretation thereof, with this preamble: "It is not any high conceit of my own wisdom, as if I understood more than the Chaldeans do, or any designed reproach upon them, for not being able to resolve a question, which I am able to unriddle, that I engage in this matter; for I am not a person, that pretends to more skill and knowledge, than my neighbours; but it is purely the work of God, in pity to the miserable, and in mercy to my prayers, for the life and safety of myself and my friends, that has now laid open this dream to me, and explained the

meaning of it. Nor have I been so solicitous for the safety of myself, and my companions under your displeasure, as for your own honour and glory, lest you should tarnish them, by putting to death (contrary to all right and justice) so many worthy men, merely because they were not able to do a thing, that is impossible (without Divine assistance) for flesh and blood to perform."

‡ By the different emblems in the interpretation of this dream was signified to Nebuchadnezzar the four grand empires of the world; namely, the Chaldean, Persian, Grecian and Roman. The Assyrian or Chaldean, is represented

tation thereof, that, after prostrating himself before Daniel, he commanded that an oblation and sweet odours should be offered up to him; and then addressed him as follows: *Of a truth it is that your God is a God of Gods; and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret.* The king then complimented Daniel with many valuable presents, placed him at the head of his learned men, and made him governor of the whole province of Babylon; and, at his request, put his three friends into places of the highest trust and importance.

Some time after this Nebuchadnezzar, having grown proud in consequence of the interpretation of his dream, ordered a statue of gold to be made thirty yards in height, and of a proportionable bigness. This monstrous figure he ordered to be set up in the plains of Dura, near Babylon, and summoned his subjects of all degrees and conditions to appear at the dedication of it. He likewise issued out a proclamation that on the day this ceremony should be performed, every person, as soon as the signal was given (which was to be by the striking up of music) should all prostrate themselves on their faces and worship it, on pain of being thrown into a burning fiery furnace.

This order was strictly obeyed by all except the captive Jews, among whom those which particularly attracted the notice of the Chaldeans were, Daniel and his three friends. They did not, however, chuse to interrupt Daniel on account of his very great importance, and being the king's favourite; but they laid an accusation before the king against his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. These three being carried before Nebuchadnezzar, he asked them the reason why they disobeyed his orders, telling them if they continued obstinate, and did not worship the image in the same manner as the rest of his subjects, they should receive the punishment denounced against offenders in the proclamation issued on the occasion. They however, peremptorily refused paying adoration to the image, and defied the king's threats, telling

him they trusted in a God, who was able to deliver them from his rage. *O Nebuchadnezzar, said they, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy Gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.*

Nebuchadnezzar was so incensed at this peremptory reply, that he ordered the sentence pronounced in the decree to be immediately put in execution against the three youths, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego; and farther commanded that, on this occasion, the furnace should be made seven times hotter than usual, which being done, they should be bound and thrown into it, as contemners of his royal will and pleasure. These orders were strictly obeyed, and the furnace was made so intensely hot, that the persons appointed to throw them in, were scorched to death. But the three persons consigned to destruction by the king received not the least hurt: no sooner were they thrown into the furnace than the cords with which they were tied were loosed, and they walked in the midst of the fire, blessing and praising God. The king, who had placed himself at a secure distance in order to see the sentence executed, observing the fierceness of the fire to abate, and that instead of three, there were four persons in the furnace, cried out with surprize and amazement, *Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? Lo, I see four men loose walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.* The king, then approaching the furnace, called to Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, saying, *Ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither.* They accordingly came out of the furnace in the presence of the king and all his attendants, who saw them unhurt, not a hair of their heads being singed, or the least scent of fire arising from their bodies.

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by gold, because it was the first, and the most magnificent, if not the most extensive; and Nebuchadnezzar, being then upon the throne, is said to be head of it. That of silver represents the Persian empire, founded by Cyrus on the ruins of the Chaldean, but inferior to it, at least in its duration if not in its extent. That of brass is the Grecian empire, founded by Alexander on the ruins of the Persian, and its character is, that it *should bear rule over all the earth*, Dan. ii. 39. which was verify'd in its great founder; for, upon his return from India to Babylon, the ambassadors of almost all the known parts of the World resorted thither, to pay their homage and acknowledgment of his Dominion. That of Iron is the Roman Empire, which is distinguished by its breaking in pieces, and subduing all things, ver. 40. For, whilst it was in its full strength and vigour, under its consuls and first emperors it brought under its dominion all the kingdoms and states, that were then subsisting in Europe, Africa, and a great part of Asia; but, from that time, it became a mixture of iron and clay. Its emperors proved most of them vicious and corrupt, either by their tyranny making themselves hateful to their subjects, or, by their follies and vices, contemptible. Lastly, that of the Stone out of the mountain is the fifth monarchy, or the kingdom of the Messiah; which, against all the power and policy of the Roman Empire, prevailed, not by an external force, but by the powerful preaching of the gospel, to the suppression and defeat of wickedness and impiety, idolatry and superstition, and it

shall stand for ever, and never be destroyed, Dan. ii. 44. which can be said of no other kingdom, but that of Jesus Christ, which, for these seventeen hundred years and upwards, has withstood the violence of persecutions, and all other contrivances formed against it, and has the sure promises of its Almighty founder on its side, that *the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it*, Matt. xvi. 18.

§ According to the vulgar Latin edition of the Bible, in the third chapter of Daniel, between the twenty-third and twenty-fourth verses, is added the *Song of the three Children*; but being no where extant, either in the Hebrew or Chaldean language, and never received in the canon of Holy Writ by the Jewish church, it is placed among the apocryphal writings, where it stands next to the Book of Baruch, though the church of Rome, by a decree of the Council of Trent, has not only given it, but likewise the History of *Susanna*, and of *Bel and the Dragon* a place among the canonical scriptures. The *Song of the three Children* consists of two parts, namely a Prayer, and a Thanksgiving. The Prayer is a devout confession of the sins of the people, and an acknowledgment of God's righteousness in bringing their captivity, and other calamities, upon them. The Thanksgiving is a more solemn exhortation to all persons whatever, but more especially the three Hebrew children, who were thus *saved from the hand of death, to bless the Lord, praise him, and exalt him above all for ever and ever.*

The haughty king was now convinced that there was a more powerful Being than himself, who could protect his servants from the rage of the most insolent and arbitrary tyrant. He therefore, in a sudden transport of devotion, broke out into the following exclamation: *Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god except their own God. Therefore, I make a decree, that every people, nation and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.* Having said this, Nebuchadnezzar dismissed Daniel's three friends, and afterwards promoted them to much greater honours than they had before enjoyed in the province of Babylon.

Some time after this the judgments which the prophet Jeremiah had denounced against his countrymen the Jews, when they rejected the counsel of God, and fled into Egypt for protection (as they vainly thought) began to operate. Nebuchadnezzar, notwithstanding that the subjects of Pharaoh Hophra, king of Egypt, had revolted from him, and declared Amasis, an officer of his court, their king, he took advantage of the intestine troubles that ensued; and marching with a great army into the country, in a short time, laid it waste from one end to the other. Of the Jews, who, after the murder of Gedaliah, had fled thither, some he slew, and others he carried away captive to Babylon; so that scarce any escaped, but such as fled out of Egypt, and afterwards settled themselves in their own land at the end of the captivity.

Nebuchadnezzar, having thus reduced the kingdom of Egypt, and constituted Amasis his viceroy, returned in triumph to Babylon, where he indulged himself in the pleasures of his court, and, for a time, quietly enjoyed the fruits of his conquests. At length his peace of mind was interrupted by another dream, which he perfectly remembered, and therefore sent for his own magicians first to give him the interpretation of it. The Chaldeans, after hearing the dream, were as much at a loss how to interpret it as when the king demanded the discovery of his former dream which he had forgot. The revealing of these great secrets was reserved for the servant of God; and therefore the king, not meeting with any satisfaction from his own subjects, at length sent for Daniel, to whom he recounted his dream in words to this effect: "I saw (said he) a tree
" of a prodigious bigness, which seemed to reach
" from earth to heaven. It was fair, and full
" of fruit; yielded shelter to the beasts and
" fowls, and sustenance to all flesh. I saw like-
" wise an angel coming down from heaven, who
" cried with a loud voice, Hew down the tree,
" cut off the branches, shake off the leaves,
" scatter the fruit, and let all creatures depart
" from it; but let the stump remain in the earth,
" and bind it with a band of iron and brags, in
" the tender grass of the field, and let it be wet
" with the dew of heaven, and let his portion

" be with the beasts in the grass of the earth:
" let his heart be changed from that of a man,
" and a beast's heart be given him, and let seven
" times pass over him.—This dream I king
" Nebuchazzar have seen. Now thou, O
" Daniel, declare the interpretation thereof,
" forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom
" are not able to make known unto me the in-
" terpretation: but thou art able; for the spirit
" of the Holy God is in thee."

When Daniel heard the dream, he was so affected at the dreadful judgments it portended to the king, that, for some time, he was unable to speak. Nebuchadnezzar, judging the cause of his silence, endeavoured to encourage him, saying, *Let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee.* To which Daniel replied, *My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies.* Daniel then, addressing himself with great tenderness and concern for the king, proceeded to the interpretation of his dream in words to this effect:

" The tree (said he) O king, which thou sawest
" in thy dream, is thyself; for thy greatness
" reacheth unto the heavens, and thy dominions
" to the end of the earth: But the angel, who
" came from heaven with orders to cut down the
" tree, denotes the decree of the Most High,
" which is determined against thee, viz. that
" thou shalt be driven from men, and thy dwell-
" ing shall be with the beasts of the field; that
" thou shalt eat grass with the oxen, and be wet
" with the dew of heaven; that seven years
" shall pass over thee, before thou comest to
" consider, that God ruleth over the kingdoms
" of men; and that, after such a term, thou
" shalt be restored to thy kingdom, which is the
" thing intimated by the stump of the tree that
" was ordered to be left. And now, that thou
" hast heard the interpretation of this dream,
" permit me, O king, to advise thee to atone
" for thy sins by an holy life, and by acts of
" mercy to the poor; and to recommend thy-
" self to the mercy of God, that he may pro-
" long thy posterity."

It might very naturally have been supposed that Nebuchadnezzar, who had seen the verifying of Daniel's prophecies, and had likewise been an eye-witness of God's great power and providence, would have been somewhat depressed in mind at this interpretation of his dream, which was a judgment of the most severe nature pronounced solely against himself. But, instead of humbling himself, and endeavouring, by repentance, to deprecate the Divine decree as Daniel advised him, he became intoxicated with pride and arrogance, and, being detached from war, employed his time in raising buildings in Babylon as monuments of his greatness.

About twelve months after Daniel had interpreted the king's last dream, Nebuchadnezzar, being one day walking about the palace, and surveying his new buildings, he ostentatiously said to one of his attendants, *Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?* No sooner had the king uttered these words, than a voice from heaven was heard to say, *O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee*

it is spoken: the kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

This dreadful sentence immediately took place, the king, for exalting himself above the state of men, being deprived of his senses, and reduced to the condition of a beast. He continued in this state for seven years, during which, agreeable to the interpretation of his dream, he lived abroad in the fields, eat grass like an ox, laid on the ground in the open air, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till at length *his hairs were grown like eagles feathers, and his nails like birds claws.*

After Nebuchadnezzar had continued his appointed time in this sad and forlorn condition, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and God was pleased not only to restore him to his understanding and form, but likewise to his former state and dignity; for which he made this thankful acknowledgment: *Now I Nebuchadnezzar*

praise, and extol, and honour, the king of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgments: and those who walk in pride he is able to abase.

Nebuchadnezzar lived but a very short time after being restored to his kingdom. The punishment he had undergone, which he knew to have been inflicted on him by the hand of Providence, was deeply impressed on his mind, and his time was spent in doing acts very different to those he had formerly practised. He died in the year of the world 3442, and before Christ 562; after having reigned, from the death of his father, according to the Babylonish account, forty-three years. He was certainly one of the greatest princes that had appeared in the East for many ages before him; and, according to Megasthenes, both for his enterprizes and performances, far excelled any other monarch of his time. The same historian informs us, that, a little before his death, he foretold the coming of the Persians, and their subduing the kingdom of Babylon; but this he might gather from the prophet Daniel, and especially from the interpretations of his dreams.

C H A P. III.

Evil-merodach, on the death of his father Nebuchadnezzar, succeeds him on the throne of Babylon. He is murdered by his relations, and succeeded by Neriglissar, who is conquered and slain by the king of the Medes. Laborosoarchad ascends the throne, and is murdered by his subjects, after reigning only nine months. He is succeeded by Belshazzar, supposed to be the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar. Cyrus, king of Persia, lays siege to Babylon. Belshazzar makes a great feast for his courtiers, and orders the vessels of gold and silver, which had belonged to the temple, to be used on the occasion. During the entertainment there suddenly appears a hand-writing on the wall, at which the king is greatly alarmed, and sending for Daniel, he gives an explanation of it, the substance of which portends the king's destruction. Cyrus takes the city of Babylon by surprise, and, in the confusion, Belshazzar is slain. He is succeeded by Darius, who manifests a particular esteem for Daniel. The people being jealous of the growing power of Daniel, form a conspiracy against his life. He is thrown into the den of lions, from whence he is miraculously delivered by the interposition of Providence. The Story of Susanna and the elders.

ON the death of Nebuchadnezzar his son Evil-merodach succeeded to the throne of Babylon; immediately after which he made some amends for his father's hard usage of Jehoiakim (the captive king of Judah) whom he not only released from his confinement, which had lasted thirty-seven years, but likewise promoted him to great honours in his palace. The reign of this prince, however, was but short, for after being on the throne only two years, during which he led the most profligate and wicked life, he became so universally hated, that even his own relations conspired against him, and put him to death.

Evil-Merodach was succeeded by Neriglissar, his sister's husband, who had been one of the principal persons concerned in the conspiracy against his life. No sooner was he seated on the

throne than he made great preparations for waging war against the Medes, of which Cyaxares their king being apprised, he called in the assistance of his nephew Cyrus, who immediately went to him with a body of thirty thousand Persians. Cyaxares, joining his own army with that brought by his nephew, made him general of the whole, and he immediately marched to give battle to Neriglissar. The forces of Cyrus were much more numerous than those of the king of Babylon, so that when the two armies engaged victory soon declared itself in favour of Cyrus: the Babylonians were totally routed, their king, with great numbers of others, slain, and the rest of the troops obliged to save themselves by a precipitate flight.

On the death of Neriglissar, his son Laborosoarchad succeeded to the throne of Babylon. He

He was a prince naturally addicted to all manner of wickedness, cruelty * and injustice, for which he became so odious to his own subjects, that they conspired against him, and, after he had reigned only nine months, put him to death.

Laborosoarchad was succeeded by Belshazzar, the grandson of the great Nebuchadnezzar. In the first year of this prince's reign Daniel had his vision of the four beasts †, representing the four empires of the Chaldeans, Persians, Greeks and Romans; and in the third year he had the famous vision of the ram and he-goat, ‡ by the latter of which was signified Alexander the Great, and by the former Darius Codomannus, one of the Persian kings who were the successors of Cyrus.

Cyrus, encouraged by his late success against Neriglissar, resolved to invade the Babylonish dominions. He accordingly marched with his joint forces into the country, and after having obtained several conquests over Belshazzar's troops, he at length engaged the king himself in pitched battle, in which he proved equally victorious, and Belshazzar was reduced to the necessity of saving himself by flight. Cyrus pursued his victories, and marching his army to Babylon, laid such close siege to the place, that Belshazzar was obliged to shut himself up within its walls. Some time after Cyrus had laid siege to Babylon, Belshazzar made a great feast for all his courtiers, on which occasion he ordered the vessels of gold and silver which his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple of Jerusalem, to be brought into the banqueting-house, that he and his princes, together with his wives and concubines, might drink out of them. This was accordingly done, and, to add to their profaneness, in their cups, they sang songs in praise of their respective idols.

Belshazzar so provoked God by this sacrilegious contempt of his holy worship, and the profanation of the vessels dedicated to his service, that he was pleased to put an immediate check to his mirth, by causing an hand to appear upon the wall, which, in three words, wrote the sentence of his condemnation. Belshazzar, who saw the hand that wrote, was so alarmed at this amazing prodigy, that he immediately sent for the most learned of his people to tell him the meaning of it; but notwithstanding the promised reward of purple vests and chains of gold to those who should discover it, they were so far from being able to give an interpretation of what was wrote, that they could not even read it.

This circumstance gave the king and his whole court great disturbance of mind, and put a total stop to their mirth. The queen dowager (wife of the late Nebuchadnezzar) hearing of the

king's consternation, went into the banqueting-house, and told him, there was a man in his dominions named Daniel, whom his grandfather, for his extraordinary abilities in discovering strange things, had made master of the magicians, and that if he sent for him he would give an explanation of the words that so much perplexed him.

Belshazzar, anxious to know this terrible secret, immediately sent for Daniel, whom, on his arrival, he received very courteously, and made him the same offer of honours and presents he had done to his own magicians, provided he would explain the writing. Daniel modestly refused the offers made him; but having undertook to perform what was required, he told the king, that since he had not humbled himself, nor taken example by his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar, who, for his pride, was chased from the conversation of men, and reduced to the state of a beast; but had lifted himself up against the Lord of heaven, and profaned the holy vessels dedicated to his service, God, being provoked by these his crimes, had sent a hand to write upon the wall his condemnation in these words: *MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN*. He then proceeded to an explanation of their meaning, which he gave in words to this effect: "*Mene*, says he, which signifies *number*, intimates, that the days, both of your life, and of your reign, are numbered, or that you have but a short time to live. *Tekel*, which signifies *weight*, intimates that you have been weighed in the balance of God's justice, and found too light; and *Upharsin*, which signifies a *fragment*, intimates, that your kingdom shall be divided, and given to the Medes and Persians."

Belshazzar, having heard this dreadful sentence pronounced by Daniel, how unwelcome soever the interpretation was to himself, strictly fulfilled his promise, by causing him to be clothed in purple, with a chain of gold about his neck, and to be proclaimed the third person in the kingdom; all which being immediately done, Daniel took his leave and departed.

It was but a very short time before Daniel's prediction was strictly fulfilled; for that very night, whilst the king and his courtiers were still in the banqueting-house, the city was taken by surprise §, Belshazzar slain, and the kingdom translated to Cyaxares, whom the Scripture calls Darius the Mede.

Darius, from his very first accession to the throne, had a great esteem for Daniel, knowing him to be a person of extraordinary parts and learning, and long versed in affairs of state. Having divided the whole empire into an hundred and twenty provinces, over which he set governors,

* Among other acts of cruelty committed by this prince, the two following are particularly mentioned by Xenophon, viz. That the only son of one of his principal nobility, he slew at an hunting-match, to which he had invited him, for no other reason, but his throwing a dart with success at a wild beast, which himself had missed. And that he caused the son of another nobleman, to be castrated, for no other reason but because one of his concubines had commended him as being very handsome.

† See Dan. vii.

‡ Dan. viii.

§ The manner in which this was done is related by Xenophon as follows: "That two deserters, named Gadatas and Gobryas, having assisted some of the Persian army to kill the guards and seize upon the place, they entered into the room where the king was, whom they found standing up in a posture of defence, but that they soon dispatched him, whereby was fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah, *I will make drunk her princes and her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men; and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not awake, saith the Lord, whose name is the Lord of Hosts.* See Jeremiah li. 57.

governors, and over these three presidents as the king's chief ministers, he made Daniel the first; which compliment, with other favours Darius heaped on him, so excited the envy of the other presidents and princes, that they resolved, if possible, to seek his destruction.

The enemies of Daniel could not find any fault with his public administration, he being perfectly just and faithful in all things that concerned the king. Concluding, therefore, that they would not be able to find any thing to accuse him of, except in case of religion, they resolved to lay a snare for him in that respect. But they had some difficulties to work through even in this project: they knew the king was not unacquainted with his great piety and zeal in the religion of his country, and that he stood so fair in the royal favour, that they dared not directly attack him. They, therefore, laid their plot another way, and that so artfully that it was morally impossible for the least idea to be conceived of their intentions. They persuaded the king to issue out a proclamation, that whosoever should ask any petition either of God or man, except of the king only, for the space of thirty days, should be thrown to the lions. The unwary king, not suspecting any fraud, but taking it as a testimony of their affection and loyalty to him on his accession to the throne, without any hesitation, consented to their request, and a decree was immediately made for that purpose.

Daniel was not insensible that this wicked decree was designed to ensnare him; but nevertheless he continued his usual course of paying his adorations to God three times every day, and that, not in a clandestine manner, but with his chamber window open towards Jerusalem. His enemies, who had laid this snare for him, were not forgetful to watch him diligently, and having caught him in the act of prayer, they went to Darius, before whom they accused Daniel of contempt and rebellion in disobeying his decree, at the same time desiring immediate execution of the sentence against him.

Darius now perceived that his easy compliance with a fallacious offer had led him into a mistake that was likely to prove fatal to his servant Daniel; and being vexed at having suffered himself to be so imposed upon, he endeavoured to have the decree reversed. But the grandees represented to him, that the royal decrees (according to the Medes and Persians) were unalterable, and that therefore the penalty that Daniel had incurred being irreversible, he must be thrown into the den of lions.

The king's weakness in this unjust act gave way to the solicitations of these wicked men; for though Daniel's piety and wisdom had recommended him greatly to his favour, yet he thought he could not in honour go back from his word, and therefore delivered Daniel into the hands of his enemies, but not without some glimmering hopes that the God whom he served continually, would, by some means or other, preserve him. *My God, said he, whom thou serveest continually, he will deliver thee.*

Daniel was no sooner delivered into the hands of his enemies, than they immediately hurried him away to the den of lions; and, having put him in among the beasts, they not only rolled a

large stone to the mouth of the den, but had it sealed likewise with their own as well as the king's signet, that thereby they might prevent all possibility of his effecting an escape.

In the mean time the king retired to his palace very pensive, where he spent the night in great anxiety and uneasiness of mind for the fate of his favourite Daniel. Early the next morning he repaired to the den, whither he had no sooner arrived than, betwixt hope and despair, he, in a very melancholy tone, thus called to Daniel: *O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou serveest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?* Daniel immediately replied, *O king, live for ever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee; O king, have I done no hurt.*

Darius, overjoyed to find the person he so highly valued thus miraculously preserved, ordered him immediately to be taken out of the den, and at the same time commanded, that all his accusers, together with their wives and children, should be thrown into it; which being done, the lions instantly seized and tore them to pieces.

The Providence of God appearing so visibly in the preservation of Daniel, Darius issued out the following proclamation, which he ordered to be dispersed throughout his dominions. *Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men shall tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and steadfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end.*

After this no farther attempt was made to injure Daniel in the king's favour. He enjoyed the office before allotted him without interruption, and employed his time in administering the strictest justice to the people, at the same time inflicting proper punishments on those who offended the laws, or were guilty of any distinguished wickedness; of which the following is a remarkable instance.

Among the great men that resided in Babylon was one Joacim, who took a wife named Sufanna, a very beautiful woman in person, and one who, as well as her parents, lived a good and pious life. Joacim, being a very rich as well as good man, great numbers of the principal Jews resorted to his house, which was so large as to admit of every convenient accommodation, and adjoining to it was a very handsome and spacious garden. The king, for the more easy administration of justice in his capital, appointed two persons who were advanced in years, and known to be men of sagacity, to determine all disputes that should be brought before them by his subjects in that part of his dominions. These two judges, or elders, took up their residence at Joacim's house, and thither the people resorted to have their respective controversies adjusted.

Sufanna, Joacim's wife, was, as we have already observed, exceeding handsome, and her beauty struck such an impression on the minds of the two elders that they resolved, if possible, to gratify their wishes in the enjoyment of her.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.

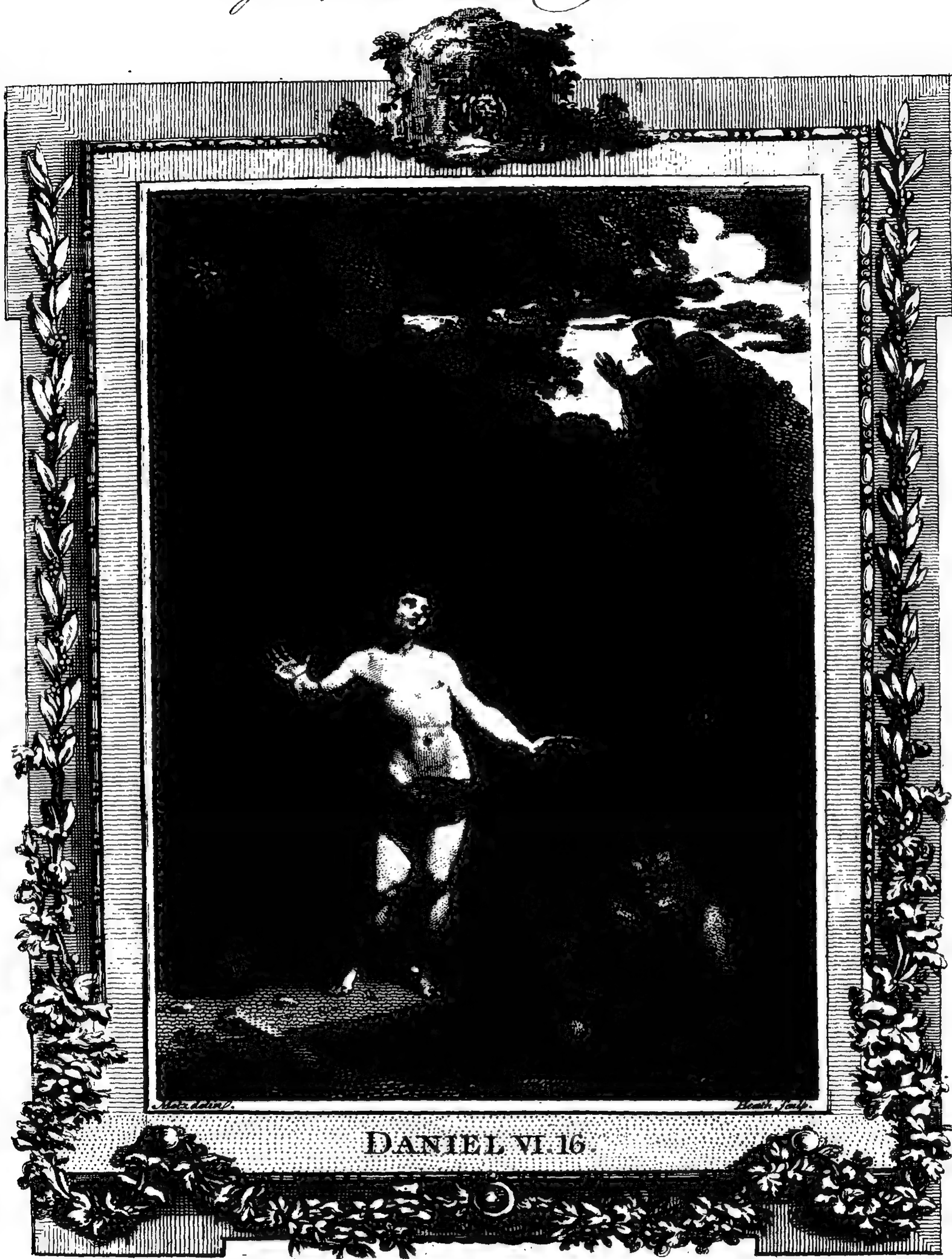


SUSANNA, I. 19.

SUSANNA

surprised by the Elders in the Garden.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



DANIEL VI. 16.

The PROPHEET DANIEL *in the* LION'S DEN.

It was a custom with Susanna to take a walk every day about noon in her husband's garden, which being observed by the two elders, they laid a scheme for carrying their design into execution. One day, a little before the time that Susanna was accustomed to take this kind of recreation, the two elders went into the garden, and placed themselves in such a part of it that they could not be seen. Soon after Susanna, accompanied by two of her maid servants, entered the place, and after walking for some time, the weather being exceeding hot, she resolved to bathe herself in a piece of water that was properly adapted for the purpose. In consequence of this resolution she bade her maids go home, and fetch her some oil and washing-balls, at the same time giving them a strict charge to fasten the doors of the garden after them when they went out, that no person whatever might gain admission till their return.

No sooner had Susanna's maids left the garden than the two elders immediately quitted their hiding-places, and, going up to Susanna, addressed her as follows: *Behold, the garden doors are shut that no man can see us, and we are in love with thee; therefore consent unto us, and lie with us. If thou wilt not, we will bear witness against thee, that a young man was with thee; therefore consent unto us and lie with us.*

It is not to be wondered at that so strange and unexpected an address, (from men who might naturally have been supposed to be the last that would be guilty of such an attempt to violate the chastity of a virtuous woman, as well as one in such an elevated station of life, and who, indeed might be justly called their protectress) should have greatly alarmed Susanna. For some time she stood silent, but at length, having a little recovered her spirits, and fetching a deep sigh, she spoke as follows: *I am straitened on every side: for if I do this thing it is death unto me; and if I do it not, I cannot escape your hands. It is better for me to fall into your hands, and not do it, than to sin in the sight of the Lord.*

Having returned this answer Susanna gave a violent shriek, hoping thereby to alarm the servants of the house, and bring them to her assistance. This had the desired effect, but as soon as the servants appeared, the two elders accused their mistress of incontinency, at which they were greatly alarmed, knowing her to have ever been a very good and virtuous woman; but being fearful of contradicting what the elders had asserted, they made no attempt to interfere in their mistress's behalf, any otherwise than, by her desire, accompanying her to the house.

The next day, when there was a full assembly of people at Joacim's house, the two elders ordered Susanna to be brought before them. Joacim was greatly alarmed on the occasion, but, being ever obedient to the commands of the elders, told his wife to attend. She accordingly went, accompanied not only by her husband, but likewise her father and mother, and all her kindred. As soon as she appeared before the elders, and in the presence of the whole assembly, they ordered her to be uncovered, she having at that time a veil over her face; which being done they then laid their

hands upon her head, and, addressing themselves to the heads of the assembly, laid against her the following accusation: "As we walked," said they, in the garden alone, this woman came in with two maids, and shut the garden door, and sent the maids away. Then a young man, who was there hid, came unto her, and lay with her. Then we that stood in a corner of the garden, seeing this wickedness, ran unto them. And when we saw them together, the man we could not hold: for he was stronger than we, and opened the door, and leaped out. But having taken this woman, we asked who the young man was, but she would not tell us. These things do we testify."

Notwithstanding the heinousness of this accusation, and its being against a person whose chastity was never yet disputed, yet the heads of the assembly gave credit to what the elders had asserted, and, after some deliberation, condemned Susanna to death. As soon as Susanna heard the dreadful sentence, she fell on her knees, and thus exclaimed: *O everlasting God, that knowest the secrets, and knowest all things before they be: thou knowest that they have borne false witness against me, and, behold, I must die; whereas I never did such things as these men have maliciously invented against me.*

But all Susanna could say in her own defence was of no avail. The credit of the two base elders bore such an ascendancy among the people, that, agreeable to the sentence pronounced, they proceeded to conduct her to the place adapted for her execution. But the Lord was pleased to listen to her cries, and to stir up an advocate for her in the person of Daniel, who, meeting her on the way, exclaimed, with a loud voice, *I am clear from the blood of this woman.* The people, who paid great reverence to Daniel, being greatly surprized at this, asked him what he meant. To which Daniel replied, *Are ye such fools, ye sons of Israel, that without examination or knowledge of the truth, ye have condemned a daughter of Israel? Return again to the place of judgment; for they have borne false witness against her.*

The people readily obeyed the directions of Daniel, and having returned to the place of trial, Daniel, by particular desire of the elders, was requested to make a strict examination into the affair for which Susanna had been condemned, that they might be satisfied either of her guilt or innocence. Daniel, taking upon him the task requested, ordered her two accusers to be placed in different apartments, which being done, he called for one of them, whom he charged with having pronounced a false judgment, condemned the innocent, and let the guilty go free. With respect to his accusation against Susanna, he asked him if he had ever seen her in the garden with a man as he had described, under what tree it was they were conversing. He answered under a mastick-tree. To which Daniel replied, *Very well; thou hast lied against thine own head; for even now the angel of God hath received the sentence of God to cut thee in two.*

This elder being now put aside, and the other brought before Daniel, he spoke to him as follows: *O thou seed of Canaan, and not of Judah, beauty hath deceived thee, and lust hath perverted thine heart. Thus have ye dealt with the daughter*

of Israel, and they for fear companied with you : but the daughter of Judah would not abide your wickedness. Now, therefore, tell me, under what tree didst thou take them companying together ? He answered, under an holm-tree. Upon which Daniel said to him, Thou hast also lied against thine own head : for the angel of God waiteth with the sword to cut thee in two, that he may destroy thee.

The whole assembly were now fully convinced of the iniquity of the two elders, and the innocence of Sufanna ; and therefore, after praising God for saving those that trust in him, they conducted them to the place designed for the execution of Sufanna, and there put them to death,

according to the law of Moses §. Thus, through the interposition of Providence, by means of his servant Daniel, did the innocent escape and the guilty suffer. The parents of Sufanna, (with Joacim, her husband, and, indeed all their kindred,) praised God for his Divine interposition in favour of their innocent daughter, who otherwise must have fallen a victim to the base contrivances of those from whom she had reason to expect the greatest protection. The whole assembly of the people likewise praised God on this occasion, and the reputation of Daniel was so far increased by it that he was ever after considered by the people as an immediate agent from God.

CHAP. IV.

The time of the Jews captivity being nearly expired, Daniel makes intercession with God for their restoration. He has a vision, in which he is assured that the Jews shall not only be delivered from their temporal, but likewise their spiritual, captivity. After the destruction of Babylon, Cyrus is made sole monarch over the Persian empire. He publishes a decree, in which he gives free liberty to the Jews to return to Jerusalem, and rebuild the city and temple. They accordingly depart, and, having entered Judea, disperse themselves over the country, agreeable to their tribes and families. They rebuild the several cities that had been destroyed previous to their captivity. They all assemble at Jerusalem, and there celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. The people contribute largely towards defraying the expences of rebuilding the temple. The foundation of the temple laid. The Samaritans offer their assistance, which being refused, they devise means for obstructing the execution of the work. Death and Character of Daniel.

THE term of seventy years, which the prophet Jeremiah, by Divine direction, had stipulated for the captivity of the Jews, being now drawing towards a conclusion, Daniel thought it a duty to humble himself before God, and to make his ardent supplications to him, that he would be pleased to remember his people, and grant them their liberty, that they might restore the city of Jerusalem, and his holy sanctuary, which had been so long destroyed.

The prayers of Daniel were heard, for that very night the angel Gabriel appeared to him in a vision, with assurance not only of the deliverance of the Jews from their temporal captivity under the Babylonians, but also of a much greater redemption, which God would give his church, by delivering them from their spiritual captivity under sin and Satan ; all which should be accomplished in the coming of the Messiah, the Son of God, and great Saviour of mankind.

A short time after Cyrus had reduced Babylon (which put an end to the Chaldean empire after it had continued two hundred and nine years from its first establishment by Nebonassar) he went into Persia, in order to pay a visit to his parents, who were still living. On his return through Media, he married the daughter and only child of his uncle Darius, with whom he was to have, by way of dower, the reversion of the kingdom of Media after his father's death. By this alliance Cyrus, in a short time, succeeded not only to the Babylonish empire, but likewise to the two additional kingdoms of Persia and Media ; and from hence the whole extent of his dominions took the name of the Persian empire.

Cyrus had not been long in full possession of the Persian empire, before he published a decree, in which he gave free liberty to the Jews to return into their own country, and to rebuild the House

§ That is, they stoned them to death ; for it was a practice with the Jews, when any witness was found guilty of perjury, in capital offences, to inflict the same punishment

on the perjured evidence that the accused person, had they been found guilty, would have been subject to.

House of the Lord at Jerusalem*. The sacred vessels, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the former building, and placed in the temple of his idol Bel, he ordered his treasurer to restore; and wrote commendatory letters† to the governors of several provinces to give what assistance laid in their power towards the intended undertaking.

It is little to be wondered at that such a decree should be highly pleasing to the Jews, who had been so long in a state of captivity. They accordingly assembled together from all parts of the kingdom of Babylon, to the number of forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, which, together with their servants (who were seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven more) amounted, in the whole, to 49,697 persons. These all belonged to the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and who had been made captives by Nebuchadnezzar. The ten tribes, who had been dispersed before by the kings of Assyria into various provinces, had the same privilege, by this decree, of returning to their own country, which they did some time after; but the tribes of Judah and Benjamin went first, because the re-building of the temple principally concerned them, as Jerusalem was within their dominions.

The chief leaders of those returning captives who went from Babylon were, Zerubbabel and Jeshua. The former of these, (whose Babylonish name was Sheshbazzar) was the son of Shealtiel, the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, who was kept so long captive in Babylon. Jeshua was the son of Jozadack, the son of Seraiah,

who was high-priest when Jerusalem was destroyed; and put to death by Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah in Syria; so that the former was descended from the regal; and the latter from the pontifical family; in a direct line Zerubbabel was made governor of the land by a commission from Cyrus; Jeshua was appointed head of the priest-hood; and with them were joined several others, as assistants in settling all affairs both in church and state.

These regulations being made, the captives, headed by their leaders, left Babylon, in the first month of the Jewish sacred year called Nisan, which answers, in our kalendar to part of March and part of April. On their entrance into Judea they immediately dispersed themselves (according to their tribes and families) into different parts of the country, where they soon rebuilt the cities that had been destroyed, and cultivated the lands which had so long lain waste and desolate.

On the first day of the seventh month (which is called Tizri ‡) all the people from their several cities assembled at Jerusalem, where they offered up sacrifices; made solemn prayers to God, and kept the several feasts appointed by the law of Moses. On the first of the month, which was the day of their arrival, they celebrated the Feast of the Trumpets. On the tenth was the great day of Expiation §, when the high-priest made atonement for the sins not only of himself, but all the people; and on the fifteenth began the Feast of Tabernacles, which lasted till the twenty-third.

All

* It is very reasonable to suppose, that this decree, made by Cyrus in favour of the Jews, was, in a great measure, owing to the good offices of Daniel. After Cyrus had made himself master of the city of Babylon, he found Daniel to be an old minister of state, famed all over the east for his great wisdom, and, in many things, for a knowledge superior to the rest of mankind; and accordingly we find, that he not only employed him as such, but, upon settling the government of the whole empire, made him superintendant, or prime minister of state, over all the provinces into which his dominions were divided. In this station of life, Daniel must have been a person of great authority at court, and highly in the esteem of his prince; and therefore, as we find him earnest in his prayer to God for the restoration of his people, (Dan. ix.) it is reasonable to suppose he would be equally warm in his intercession for them to the king. To effect this, it is not improbable, that he might shew him those passages in Isaiah, which speak of him by name (an hundred and fifty years before he was born) as a great prince, a conqueror, the ruler of many nations, and the restorer of his people, by causing the temple to be rebuilt, and the city of Jerusalem to be re-inhabited. That Cyrus, indeed, had seen these passages is evident, not only from the testimony of Josephus, but from the recital that is made of them in the decree itself (Ezra 1. 2.) and therefore what person could be so proper to shew them to him, and to recommend the accomplishment of them to his princely care, as Daniel, who had such great credit with the king, and so warm a concern for the restoration of Jerusalem?

† One of the commendatory letters, directed to the governors of Syria, Josephus has recorded as follows:

“Cyrus, the king, to Syfina and Sarabasan, sendeth Greeting.

“Be it known unto you that I have given leave to all the Jews, that are in my dominions, to return into their own country, and there to rebuild their capital city, with the holy temple at Jerusalem, in the same place where it stood before. I have likewise sent my treasurer Mithridates

“and Zerubbabel, the governor of Judea, to superintend the building, and to see it raised sixty cubits upward from the ground, and as many over; the walls to be three rows of polished stone, and one of the wood of the country together with an altar for sacrifices, and all this to be done at my charge.—It is my farther pleasure that they receive entire to themselves all the profits and revenues that were formerly enjoyed by their predecessors, and that they have an allowance paid them of 205,500 drachma's, in consideration of beasts for sacrifices, wine and oil, and 2,500 measures of wheat, in lieu of fine flour; and all this to be raised upon the tribute of Samaria; that the priests may offer up sacrifices according to the laws and ceremonies of Moses, and pray daily for the king and the royal family, and for the welfare and happiness of the Persian empire: and let no man presume to do any thing, contrary to the tenor of this my royal will and proclamation, on pain of forfeiting both life and possessions.”

‡ The seventh month, called Tizri, answers in part to our September and October. The first day of this month was the beginning of the Jewish civil year, and on it was the Feast of Trumpets, which lasted two days, when all labour and business was suspended; and, while sacrifices were in use, the priests offered, in the name of the whole nation, a solemn sacrifice of a calf, two rams and seven lambs, all of the same year, together with the flour and wine which usually accompanied such sacrifices.

§ This was a very material solemnity used by the Jews, the ceremonies attending which were as follow: The high-priest, after having washed not only his hands and feet (as was usual in common sacrifices) but likewise his body, dressed himself in a plain linen garment like one of the priests, having neither his purple robe, ephod, or pectoral on, because he was going to expiate his own, as well as the peoples sins. He first offered a bullock and a ram for his own sins and those of the other priests, putting his hand upon their heads, and confessing his own sins, and the sins of his house. He then received from the princes of the people two goats for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering, to be offered in the name of all the people. It was determined by

All the Jews who assembled at Jerusalem continued there during the whole time of celebrating these feasts; and, in order to promote the restoration of God's worship in that place, contributed very liberally towards the rebuilding of the temple, the whole collection received by free-will offerings, (exclusive of an hundred vestments for the priests) amounting to sixty-one thousand drachms of gold, and five thousand manas of silver ||. Having made these contributions, the people returned to their respective cities, perfectly satisfied in their minds with the benefits they had received in attending those religious ceremonies, which, from their great offences, they had been so long deprived of enjoying.

The people of Jerusalem, having received so considerable a contribution towards rebuilding the temple of God, began immediately to convert it to the purposes for which it was designed. The first year was taken up in providing workmen, and preparing materials for carrying on the work, during which farther contributions were made towards defraying the expences.

In the second month of the second year*, the foundation of the temple was laid, on which occasion the greater part of the people expressed their joy by the loudest acclamations. But while these were rejoicing at the laying of the foundation of the new temple, the old men, who had seen the glory of the first, wept at the remembrance of it. *And the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the House of the Lord was laid. But many of the priests and Levites, and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice.*

The affliction these elders expressed on this occasion was not because this temple was like to prove far inferior to that of Solomon's with respect to its outward structure, but because it was to want those extraordinary marks of the Divine favour wherewith the other temple was honoured. This temple was, no doubt, of the same dimensions with the other; but here was the sad difference which drew tears from the eyes of the elders: that, to all appearance, there were no hopes that the poor beginnings of the *latter temple* would ever be raised to the grandeur and

magnificence of the former; the *one* had been built by the wisest and richest king, and constantly adorned by some one or other of his posterity; the *other* now begun was by a small company of exiles just restored from their captivity—the *one* built in a time of profound peace, and the greatest opulence; the *other*, in a time of common calamity and distress:—the *one* finished with the most costly stones and timber, wrought with exquisite art, and overlaid with vast quantities of gold; the *other* partly to be raised out of little better materials than what could be dug from the ruinous foundation of the old one.

But the occasion of their grief was not altogether this, that the materials and ornaments of the second temple were even as nothing *in comparison with the first* (Haggai ii. 3.) but that the Ark of the Covenant, and the mercy-seat, which was in it, the holy fire upon the altar, the Urim and Thummim, the Spirit of Prophecy, and the Shechinah, or Divine Presence, (the five great things for which the former temple was so renowned) were lost and gone, and never to be recovered.

This was certainly a just matter of lamentation to those who had seen these singular tokens of the Divine favour in the former temple, and a discouragement to their proceeding with the building of the present. But to mitigate their uneasiness on this head, the prophet Haggai was sent to inform them, that all these wants and defects would be abundantly repaired by the coming of the Messiah, the true Shechinah of the Divine Majesty, in the time of the second temple. *I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory; the glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts. Haggai ii. 7. 9.*

As soon as the Samaritans (who were planted in the several cities that formerly belonged to the inhabitants of the kingdom of Israel, whom Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, had long before carried away captive, and in whose stead the Samaritans were placed) heard that the people of Jerusalem had begun to rebuild the temple, they sent deputies to Zerubbabel, the governor, desiring that they might be permitted to contribute towards the execution of the undertaking, alledging, that they worshipped the same God as did

lots which of the two goats should be sacrificed, and which set at liberty; and therefore, after he had perfumed the Sanctuary with some burning incense, he took some of the blood of the bullock which he had sacrificed, and, dipping his finger in it, sprinkled it seven times between the ark and the veil, which separated the Holy of Holies from the body of the tabernacle or temple. After this he came out again, and having sacrificed the goat upon which the lot was fallen, he returned with some of its blood into the Sanctuary, and there sprinkled it, in the same manner he had done before that of the bullock. Then coming out again he sprinkled both sides of the court with the blood of the goat, and proceeding to the altar of burnt-offerings, wet the four horns of it with the blood of the goat and bullock, and sprinkled it seven times with the same. After all these ceremonies were finished, the goat that was to be set at liberty (which was commonly called the Scape-Goat) was brought to the high-priest, who having put both his hands upon it, and confessed his own sins, as well as those of the people, delivered it to persons appointed to that office, who carried it into the wil-

derness and there left it. After this the high-priest washed himself again all over in the tabernacle, or temple, and putting on his pontifical dress, sacrificed two rams for a burnt-offering, one for himself, and the other for the people. He then concluded the whole with reading the law, and giving his blessing on the people, who all, on this occasion, behaved with great devotion, and returned home with a full persuasion and assurance that their sins were done away, and entirely expiated.

|| Every drachm of gold is worth ten shillings of our money, and every mana of silver, nine pounds; so that the whole amounted to about 75,500l. of our money. From hence it is evident, that though the Jews were captives in Babylon, yet they were not in so poor a state as some may imagine. It is true they wrought for their lords and masters, but at the same time, some of them held very considerable offices at court, and others had liberty to trade, and get riches for themselves.

* This answers in part to our April and May.

did the people of Judah. *Let us build with you; said they; for we seek your God as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him, since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither.*

The Governor Zerubbabel having held a consultation with the chiefs of the families of Israel, they, after some little deliberation, resolved, by no means whatever, to allow them any share in the work, being apprehensive that those who had been no better than idolaters (for at the same time that they had worshipped the true God they also paid adoration to false ones) might have at the bottom some evil design in the offer of their services; and therefore they absolutely refused them. *Ye have nothing to do with us, said they, to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the Lord God of Israel, as king Cyrus, the king of Persia, hath commanded us.*

This refusal so exasperated the Samaritans, that, from that very moment, they made it their constant endeavours, as much as in them lay, to impede the execution of the work. Though they could not altar the decree, which Cyrus had made in favour of it, yet, by bribes, and underhand dealings with his ministers, they, in a great measure, retarded it, so that for several years the building went on but slowly; and on the death of the prophet Daniel (who was a powerful advocate for his countrymen at the Persian court) and the death of their great benefactor Cyrus†, which happened not long after, the work was quite stopped; nor was it resumed till the second year of the reign of Darius, the son of Hystaspes.

With respect to Daniel, it does not appear that he took any advantage of the edict which Cyrus made in favour of the Jews; and it is reasonable to suppose that, as he did not return with them to Jerusalem, the king might require his continuance with him, and Daniel might the rather consent to it, as having thereby a better opportunity of befriending his countrymen upon any exigency. To this purpose it is highly probable that he attended the Persian court, which, after the taking and defeating of Babylon, resided in summer at Shushan, and, in the winter, at Ecbatane. In the palace of Shushan Daniel (as

himself tells us, chap. viii. 1, &c.) had several visions. In this city (as we are informed by Josephus) he built a famous edifice, which was finished with such exquisite art, that it continued fresh and beautiful in his days; and in this city the common tradition is, that he died in the ninety-first year of his age; for even to this day (according to the accounts of some modern authors) the inhabitants of the place where he is said to have died shew a monument, which they verily assert was erected to his memory.

But the greatest, and most valuable monument Daniel left behind him was his writings, of which Josephus, the famous Jewish historian gives the following character: "He had (says he) this peculiar blessing attending him, that he lived in great reputation both with prince and people; and when he died, left an immortal memory behind him. His writings, which are still extant, and in common use, we keep as a sure pledge that he had a distinguished intimacy with God.—For, whereas other prophets were employed in foreboding calamities and ill news, which drew upon them disgrace from princes, and hatred from the people, Daniel, on the contrary, foretold, in general, nothing but happy events, and what was agreeable; so that the nature of his predictions was such as gained him the goodwill of all, and such the certainty of them as gained him a ready credence with all. This (as the historian remarks) may serve not only to establish a veneration for the memory of a man, whom God so highly honoured, but to confound likewise the impious doctrines of some who will not allow of any over-ruling Providence interposing in the government and preservation of the Universe, but will have the whole course of sublunary things to be nothing more than one continued jumble of contingencies. For when I consider the prophecies of Daniel (says he) I am astonished at the ignorance and irreligion of those people who deny a Providence; for how should it happen that things predicted in one age should be punctually fulfilled in another, if, according to their opinion, all things were left to the contingency of mere chance?"

† It is generally agreed by historians, that Cyrus, at the time of his death, was about seventy years of age; but they differ greatly among themselves as to the manner of his death. Some are of opinion that he was taken in an engagement, and hanged; others, that he died of a wound, which he received in his thigh; and others, that he was killed in a battle with the people of Samos. Herodotus, Justin, and Valerius Maximus tell us, that, in his war against the Scythians, falling into an ambush, which queen Thomyris laid for him, he was taken prisoner, and, by her orders, beheaded.—The account Xenophon gives of him is, that he died

peaceably in his bed, amidst his friends, and in his own country. There is, indeed, little reason to think, either that so wise a man as Cyrus should, in his advanced years, engage in so desperate an undertaking as the Scythian expedition is represented to have been; or that, had he died in Scythia, his mangled body could ever have been obtained out of the hands of those barbarians to be buried at Parsagueda in Persia, as most authors agree it was, and where, we are credibly informed, his monument was to be seen in the time of Alexander the Great.

C H A P. V.

Cambyfes succeeds Cyrus on the throne of Perfia, and, in confequence of an application from the Samaritans, interrupts the building of the temple of Jerufalem. He dies and is fucceeded by Artaxerxes. To this prince the Samaritans prefent a remonftrance againft the going on of the work at Jerufalem. He liften to it, and puts an entire ftop to the building of the temple. Artaxerxes dies, and is fucceeded by Darius, who not only confirms the decree of Cyrus for rebuilding the temple, but likewise grants one of his own for that purpofe. The finifhing and dedication of the temple. The Samaritans refufe to pay tribute-money to the temple, but are compelled to do it by order of Darius. Darius dies, and is fucceeded by his fon Xerxes, who confirms to the Jews all the privileges that had been granted them by his father Darius. He falls into contempt with his fubjects, and is murdered by the captain of his guards. He is fucceeded by his fon Artaxerxes Longimanus, on whose acceffion great rejoicings are held for 180 days. He makes a grand entertainment on the occafion, during which he fends for his queen Vafhti to fhew her to the princes. She refufes to come, for which difobedience he divorces her, and marries a beautiful Hebrew woman named Hadaffab, afterwards called Eftber.

ON the death of Cyrus the throne of Perfia was filled by his fon Cambyfes, whom the Scripture calls Ahaſuerus. Soon after his acceffion the Samaritans (inſtead of applying themſelves ſecretly to the miniſters and officers of his court as they had done in the former reign) prefented a petition to him openly, deſiring that an immediate ſtop might be put to the rebuilding of the temple of Jeruſalem. This petition, in ſome meaſure, answered their ends, for though they could not prevail on him to revoke his father's decree, yet, by the ſeveral diſcouragements which he put upon it through a variety of means, the main deſign was defeated, and very little was done during the time of his government. He died, after having reigned ſeven years and five months, and was (according to Joſephus) buried in the city of Damafcus, whither he had retired after having made a ſucceſſful excursion againſt the Egyptians.

On the death of Cambyfes the throne of Perfia fell to Artaxerxes, who was no ſooner ſeated on it than the Samaritans made ſtill ſtronger ſolicitations than they had hitherto done to prevent the rebuilding of the temple at Jeruſalem. The heads of them, having aſſembled together, drew up a remonſtrance, or memorial, which being ſigned by all the principal people, they prefented it in great form to the king. The ſubſtance of this memorial was as follows: "We are to inform you, great and powerful Sir, that the Jews† transferred into Babylon, are returned to their former poſſeſſions, where they are occupied in the re-conſtruction of their city, the ruins of which was the juſt puniſhment of their ſedition. They are re-building the temple, eſtabliſhing markets, and other places of commerce, and providing for their

defence, by a general reparation of the walls of Jeruſalem. If they are permitted to continue their operations, be aſſured, Sir, that no ſooner will they be in a condition to command, than they will refuſe to obey, for they are declared enemies to monarchical government. We conſider it as the indiſpenſable duty of faithful ſubjects to apprize you that they will diſclaim allegiance to their lawful ſovereign, and deny their proportionate contributions towards the requiſite ſupplies of the ſtate. We beſeech you, Sir, to recur to the hiſtory of your predeceſſors, where you will find the Jews to be a generation who have ever been profeſſed oppoſers to regal government; and that the daring crime of rebellion was the cauſe of laying in a ſtate of deſolation that city which they are now re-building. Should your majeſty ſuffer them to proceed, it is more than probable, that all Syria and Paleſtine will be tempted to revolt, ſo that in a ſhort time you will be excluded receiving any benefits from your territories on that ſide the river Euphrates."

Artaxerxes, after reading this remonſtrance, retired for ſome time in order to conſult the records of his anceſtors, which having done, and found ſome circumſtances to coincide with the purport of the remonſtrance, he gave the Samaritans an answer to this effect: "In conſequence of your addreſs, I have cauſed the records of former times to be examined, and have found your obſervations reſpecting the city of Jeruſalem to be founded on good authority. The Jews appear ever to have been a vindictive, turbulent people, naturally diſpoſed to rebellion, and their kings, in the laſt extreme, vexatious and tyrannical in the im-
poſition

† After the return from the captivity, the people in general came to be called Jews, becauſe, though there were many Iſraelites among them, yet they chiefly conſiſted of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin; and though the edict of

Cyrus gave permiſſion to all to return when they pleaſed, yet the ſacred writers take notice only of thoſe who returned in a body from Babylon.

" position of taxes. On these considerations I command that you exert your utmost power to prevent the re-constructing of the temple; for, in proportion to the increase of power among these people will the spirit of sedition revive; and as they have revolted against former sovereigns, there is the greatest reason to apprehend that they will audaciously contend against the authority of the present government."

The Samaritans, highly pleased with the authority vested in them by this answer, immediately returned to Samaria, from whence, taking with them a considerable body of forces, they repaired to Jerusalem; and, having pursued the king's orders with the utmost rigour, a stop was put to any further proceeding in the work, in which state it remained till the second year of the reign of king Darius.

Artaxerxes enjoyed the throne of Persia but a very short time, for he paid the debt of nature before he had sat on it one year. He was succeeded by Darius, the son of Hystaspes, a prince who had always entertained the highest respect for the Jews, and who was the greatest patron they had after their return from the Babylonish captivity.

But before we proceed to relate the particulars that took place in favour of the Jews by means of this prince, it may not be improper to mention an incident that happened soon after his accession, the particulars of which we shall take from the celebrated Josephus,

Darius, a short time after he had ascended the throne gave a superb entertainment to his principal officers, the princes and nobility of the Medes and Persians, and the governors of one hundred and twenty-seven provinces situated in that part of his dominions which lay between India and Ethiopia. To this entertainment he likewise invited Zerubbabel, the leader of the captive Jews, who had been his intimate friend, and for whom he entertained the most distinguished respect.

When the entertainment was over, all the company retired, except Zerubbabel, and two of the officers, who were the king's particular favourites. With these Darius entered into private conversation, which being continued for some time, the king told them that to him who could give the most satisfactory reply to the questions he should propose, he would grant the privilege of wearing purple, drinking out of a golden cup, riding in a chariot with a golden harness, wearing a silken tiara with a golden chain, possessing the place next inferior to himself in the council, and being considered as one of the blood royal. He then stated the questions as follow :

1. Is there any thing stronger than wine ?
2. What can exceed the strength of kings ?
3. What is superior to the power of women ?
4. Can any thing surpass truth ?

Having thus stated the questions, the king retired, first desiring Zerubbabel and the officers to weigh them in their minds, and to give him their sentiments, which, among the four, they thought the most powerful.

The next morning Darius, having summoned together a great number of his principal nobility,

whom he made acquainted with what had passed overnight, sent for Zerubbabel and the two officers, in order to report before the assembly, their sentiments on the questions he had asked.

The first who spoke was one of the officers, who urged for the superiority of wine, saying; " It disturbs the understanding, reduces the greatest sovereign to an equality with infancy, gives liberty to the slave, and makes the beggar equal to an emperor: it elevates and enlivens the hearts of the miserable, relieves every want, gives confidence to the villain, and puts him above the fear of kings: it causes men to disregard their dearest friends, and assault them with as much fury as they would shew towards their most deadly enemies. For these reasons I conceive the operation of wine to be the most powerful."

The next person that spoke was the second officer, who argued in favour of the power of kings. " It cannot be disputed (said he) that the Almighty has created man to be so far master over all sublunary things as to apply them to whatever purposes his inclinations may direct. As all earthly creatures are subservient to men, so kings have an authority over men themselves. The sovereign of these sovereigns of the creation must be allowed an indisputable superiority. Subjects willingly expose themselves to the most imminent dangers of war, and even contend with nature herself, in obedience to the command of their prince, who takes to himself the whole honour and profit of victory. The husbandman, with unremitting toil, cultivates the earth; and his first duty is, to supply the king's stores with the produce of his grounds. Thus, while the people are fighting and working for him, the sovereign indulges himself in all the luxuries of abundance, security and ease: he sleeps surrounded by his guards, who dare not close their eyes while their master enjoys his repose; and no other concerns must interrupt that slavery of attendance to which they are indispensably bound. What power, then, can exceed that of the man to whom the public pays such implicit obedience ?"

The two officers having thus delivered their sentiments, Zerubbabel next spoke, and his subject was on the power of women and truth. In defence of the first he argued as follows: " Neither the force of wine, nor the power of princes who bind the multitude in a common bond of allegiance, can be denied: but women have incontestably the superiority of these two. Before the king, the mother of the king existed: kings are the gifts of women: women are also the mothers and nurses of those by whom the vineyards are cultivated: they direct our domestic concerns, provide necessary and ornamental coverings for our bodies; and they are so absolutely necessary that we can neither be brought into existence, or support life without them. When a beautiful woman is before us we disregard gold and silver, or esteem them only as being the means of obtaining possession of the beloved object. The charms of women compel us to abandon our country, relations and dearest friends, and to attach ourselves wholly to them. When we have explored the sea and land for things most valuable and curious in nature, do

we not congratulate ourselves in the opportunity of presenting our acquisitions to a favourite mistress? Frequently have I seen the king condescend to receive a blow on the face from his concubine. She has taken the diadem from his head, and placed it on her own; and, dreading to give her offence, he has submitted to all her caprices, and yielded to her varying humours."

Having said thus much in favour of women, to the great admiration of the whole assembly, Zerubbabel next proceeded to argue in favour of Truth, which he did as follows: "But neither women, nor kings, (said he) can be put in competition with the power of truth. Admitting the amazing magnitude of the earth, the elevation of the heavens, the astonishing rapidity of the sun's motion, and that the whole is influenced only by Divine Providence, it must follow that the Almighty is just and true, and that the power of truth, against which nothing can ultimately prevail, supercedes every other power that can enter the conception of man. Truth alone is immutable and perfect, the advantages we derive from it are not subject to the vicissitudes of fortune, but are pure, irreproachable, and eternal."

The whole assembly bestowed the most liberal acclamations on Zerubbabel, and universally acknowledged that he had proved truth to be the only blessing not liable to change or diminution. Darius, as a testimony of his entire satisfaction, told Zerubbabel he would perform his promise: "and, said he, in consideration of your superior understanding, you shall enjoy the first place in my esteem, be next in honour to myself, and be adopted a branch of the royal family".—But to return.

On the death of Artaxerxes the edict which he had issued, for putting a stop to the building of the temple, of course ceased; but notwithstanding this the prophets Zechariah and Haggai § found some difficulty in persuading the people to resume the work. They were fearful that the interest of the Samaritans was no less powerful at the court of Darius than it had been at that of his predecessor, and that they should consequently be soon interrupted by the royal mandate. These fears the two prophets endeavoured to remove, and, by force of argument, at length prevailed on them to resume the work of building the temple. But it was not long before their implacable enemies the Samaritans betook themselves to their old practices, by endeavouring to possess Tatnai (whom Darius had made chief governor over the Provinces of Syria and Palestine) with a notion that what the Jews were doing was without authority, and would, in time, be productive of great injury to the king.

§ Concerning these prophets we refer the reader to those books in the Bible, which bear their respective names. They are both thought to have been born at Babylon during the captivity, and both, with united zeal, encouraged the people to go on with the work of the temple. On the accession of Darius to the throne, Haggai in particular, by reproaching the people for their indolence and insensibility, by telling them that they were careful enough to lodge themselves very commodiously, while the House of the Lord lay buried in

In consequence of this information Tatnai went to Jerusalem, and having called together the governor and elders of the Jews, he asked them under what sanction, or by whose authority, they were erecting so vast a building, it having rather the appearance of a castle than a temple; and wherefore the walls and gates of the city were made so strong? In answer to these questions Zerubbabel the governor, and Jeshua the high-priest, addressed themselves to Tatnai in words nearly to this effect: They told him, "that they were the servants of the great God, to whose honour the former temple was built, and to his service dedicated, by the greatest, the happiest, and the wisest prince, that ever sat on a throne: that it stood for many ages, till, by reason of the wickedness of their forefathers, the city, by God's permission, was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Chaldea, the temple pillaged and laid in ashes, and the people carried away captives into Babylon: that, when Cyrus came to be possessed of the throne of Persia and Babylon, he ordered, by his royal proclamation, the rebuilding of the temple, and the restoring of all the sacred vessels that had been taken away by Nebuchadnezzar, which accordingly were transported to Jerusalem, and laid up in the temple now erecting; that, by command of the king, Abassar was sent to see the work expedited, and, accordingly, was present at the laying of the foundation; but that, ever since that time, by one artifice or other, their enemies had found means to obstruct and retard it; and that, for the truth of these allegations, they desired him to write to Darius, that, by consulting the public records, it might be known whether or not, what they had asserted was a just representation of facts.

Tatnai took their advice, and immediately wrote to the king, acquainting him with what had passed between him and the elders of the Jews. He likewise desired that search might be made into the public records, whether the Jews had really any such decree from Cyrus or not, and that, however it might be, his majesty would be pleased to signify his will and pleasure in what manner he would have him direct his conduct.

On the receipt of this letter Darius gave immediate orders that the royal archives should be searched, which being done, a record was found to the following purport: "In the first year of the reign of king Cyrus it was ordained, that the holy temple of Jerusalem should be rebuilt, the height to be sixty cubits, and the breadth of the same measure, and that an altar should be constructed within the edifice: that the walls should be formed by three ranges of polished marble, and one range of wood,

its ruins, and by putting them in mind that the calamities of drought and famine (wherewith God had afflicted them since their return from their captivity) were owing to their neglect in not repairing the temple, he prevailed with them to set about the work in good earnest; so that, by virtue of these reproofs, and the encouragement they received from Darius after his accession to the throne of Persia, they brought the whole to a conclusion in a much shorter time than, in all probability, they would have otherwise done.

“ wood, the produce of the country; and that
“ the sacred vessels taken into Babylon by Ne-
“ buchadnezzar be restored, and placed in such
“ parts of the temple as they were formerly ac-
“ customed to be.”

On the discovery of this record, Darius or-
dered a copy of it to be immediately taken,
which being done he enclosed it in a cover, on
which he wrote an answer to Tatnai to this ef-
fect :

*King Darius, to Tatnai, Governor over the Pro-
vinces of Syria and Palestine :*

“ I hereby transmit you a copy of a letter ex-
“ tracted from the records of Cyrus ; and it is
“ my royal will and command that you strictly
“ adhere to the directions contained therein.”

This decree Darius confirmed by immediately
issuing out one of his own ||, in which he gave
the Jews an assignment of his revenues in se-
veral of his provinces for whatever money they
should want to go on with the work, and to pro-
vide them sacrifices for the service of the tem-
ple, that the priests, in their daily offices, might
offer up prayers for the prosperity of the
royal family. It was likewise ordained, in
this decree, that whoever should make any
attempt to interrupt the work a part of his house
should be pulled down, which being erected in-
to a gallows, he should be immediately hanged
on it. *Whoever, said he, shall alter this word,
let timber be pulled down from his house, and being
set up, let him be hanged thereon ; and let his house
be made a dunghill.*

In consequence of the publication of this de-
cree, and the great care that was taken to have
it fully put in execution, the work of the temple
went on so very successfully, that, in the sixth
year of Darius (according to the Jewish account)
and on the third day of the twelfth month (which
is called Adar, and answers in part to our Fe-
bruary and March) the whole was finished, and
its dedication celebrated by the priests and Le-
vites, and all the people, with the greatest so-
lemnity. By the next month, which was the
month Nisan, the first in the Jewish year, the
temple was made fit for the performance of every
part of Divine service ; and therefore, on the
fourteenth day of that month was celebrated the
feast of the Passover, the ceremonies attending
which were performed in direct conformity with
those observed previous to the destruction of
the first temple. On this occasion seven days
were spent in making oblations, after which the
people dispersed, expressing their great joy and
gladness of heart, in having the House of God
restored and that they might there praise his
holy name for the great benefits and mercies he
had been pleased to bestow on them.

The Samaritans (who were still the most im-
placable enemies to the Jews) valuing themselves
on the alliance which they claimed to the Per-
sians, and being a powerful and rich people, as

well as of an haughty and malignant disposition,
proved exceedingly vexatious to the Jews, and
exerted their utmost endeavours to annoy and
perplex them. By the decree of Cyrus, which
was confirmed by that of Darius, the tribute of
Samaria had been assigned towards the rebuilding
of the temple, but the work being now finished,
the Samaritans pretended that the end of this
assignment was ceased, and therefore refused
making any contributions towards defraying the
expences of the usual sacrifices.

These dissensions continuing, the Jews at
length drew up a memorial of complaint against
the Samaritans, and deputed Zerubbabel, with
two others, to present it to Darius. This being
done, and Darius paying proper attention to the
complaint, he returned an answer by the deputies
to this effect :

*King Darius to Tangar and Sambaba, masters of
our house at Samaria ; Sadrack, Bobelon, and
the other inhabitants of that country, greeting.*

“ You stand accused by Zerubbabel, Ananias
“ and Mardocheus, on the part of the Jews, of
“ contempt of my express commands, by with-
“ holding your contributions towards defraying
“ the expences of sacrifices to be made in the
“ temple at Jerusalem, which has been erected
“ by my full express word and commands.
“ I therefore strictly enjoin you to supply them,
“ from my treasury in Samaria, with what they
“ shall require for a due observation of their
“ religious ceremonies, that they may offer daily
“ prayers and sacrifices for the favour of God
“ both towards me and my subjects.”

This message put an effectual end to all con-
tests between the Jews and Samaritans, the lat-
ter paying the tribute demanded for the ser-
vices of the temple without farther opposition.
And this is the last good office we find recorded
in scripture that Darius did the Jews, he dying
soon after universally lamented by his subjects.

The character given of this prince by the
learned Dr. Prideaux is as follows : “ He was
“ (says he) a prince of great wisdom, clemency
“ and justice, and has the honour to be recorded
“ in holy writ for a favourer of God’s people, a
“ restorer of his temple at Jerusalem, and a pro-
“ moter of his worship therein. For all this
“ God was pleased to make him his instrument ;
“ and with respect to this I doubt not it was,
“ that he blessed him with a numerous issue, a
“ happy reign, and great prosperity.”

On the death of Darius the throne of Persia
was filled by his eldest son Xerxes, who, ac-
cording to Josephus (for we have but little ac-
count of him in the sacred records) confirmed
to the Jews all those privileges which had been
granted them by his father, particularly that
which assigned them the tribute of Samaria for
the charge of the sacrifices that were to be offered
in the temple of Jerusalem. This prince, how-
ever,

|| As Darius, the better to secure his title to the crown,
had married two of the daughters of Cyrus, he thought
himself concerned to do every thing which might tend to the

honour of that great prince, and therefore more readily con-
firmed the decree which had been granted to the Jews by that
monarch.

ever, reigned but a very short time, for having fallen into contempt with his own subjects, (though we are not particularly informed on what account) he was murdered by the captain of his guard, and succeeded on the throne by his son Artaxerxes Longimanus, whom the scripture calls Ahasuerus.

Ahasuerus, on some occasion or other, soon after his accession, appointed a solemn rejoicing in the city of Shushan*, which lasted one hundred and eighty days; at the expiration of which he made a great feast for all the princes and governors of his provinces, as did also his queen Vashti, in her own apartment, for the women of the best distinction in the city. This feast continued seven days, on the last of which the king, either through a frolic, or to shew his great affection for his queen, sent seven of his chamberlains to conduct her into his presence that he might shew her to the company, ordering at the same time that she should come with the royal diadem on her head.

This order was so inconsistent with the usage of the Persians, and so little becoming the dignity and high station of a queen, that Vashti, rather than be made a public spectacle, adventured to disobey the king's commands. Ahasuerus was so incensed at this, that, after advising with his counsellors in what manner he should punish her for so public an affront, he came to this resolution, (which was afterwards passed into an irreversible decree) that, lest Vashti's ill example should encourage other women to contemn and disobey their husbands, she should be deposed from her royal dignity, and an order be issued out for making a collection of the fairest virgins in every province through the whole empire, that, out of them, one might be chosen, whom the king should like best, to be queen, instead of the disobedient and divorced Vashti.

There happened, at this time, to live at Shushan a certain Jew, of the tribe of Benjamin, named Mordecai. He was a descendant of those

who had been carried captives to Babylon with Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and for some time had been one of the officers or principal attendants at the gate of the royal palace. Not having any children of his own he bred up Hadassah, his uncle's daughter, who, being a very beautiful young woman, among other virgins, was made choice of upon this occasion. As soon as she was taken to court, she was committed to the care of an eunuch, into whose custody these virgins were appointed to be placed; and, by her very engaging behaviour, made herself so acceptable to him, that he assigned her the very best apartment in the house allotted for their habitation, and gave her a preference in other matters from all the rest who had been selected from different parts on this occasion.

It was the custom, at this time, that every virgin, thus taken into the palace for the king's use, was to go through a course of purification, by sweet oils and perfumes, for a whole year, which, when Hadassah had done, and was, in every respect, properly prepared, she was conducted to the king's apartment, where she remained during the night. Ahasuerus was so highly delighted with her, that, intending to make her more than a concubine §, he kept her in his own palace, and, in a short time, set the royal diadem on her head, and made her his queen. The nuptials were celebrated with the greatest magnificence, and a splendid entertainment was made on the occasion, which, in honour to the new queen, was called Esther's Feast, the Persian name Esther being given her previous to the performance of the marriage ceremonies. The king, on this joyful occasion, presented his new queen with many valuable gifts, as he did also to many of the heads of the assembly; besides which he pardoned all his subjects who were in confinement for criminal offences, and granted a relaxation of tribute, for some time, in every province throughout his dominions.

* Cyrus, and the rest of the Persian kings, after the conquest of the Medes (whose country lay remote) settled their royal seat at Shushan, and made it the capital of Persia. It stood on the banks of the river Ulai, and was a place of such renown, that Strabo calls it, *a city most worthy to be praised*. Darius built here a most magnificent palace, which Aristotle calls *a wonderful palace, shining with gold, amber and ivory*. Nor is it altogether foreign to this purpose what is mentioned by the learned Dr. Lightfoot, who says, that the outward gate of the eastern wall of the temple at Jerusalem was called *the gate of Shushan*, and had the figure of that city carved on it, in acknowledgment of the decree which Darius granted in that place, in order to permit and encourage the Jews to raise the building.

§ It appears that Ahasuerus had but one wife, at least but one in chief favour and esteem with him, though it is certain he could not fail of having a great number of secondary wives or concubines. The term concubine was given to all those taken from among the virgins (who had a separate house for themselves) and conducted to the king's bed, where, having passed the night, she returned no more to the virgins apartments, but was, the next morning, received into the house of the concubines, and there treated with the same state and dignity as one of the king's wives. No man was permitted to marry either of these concubines during the life of the king; and, upon his demise, they generally fell to his successor.

C H A P. VI.

Mordecai, one of the king's officers, and a relation to queen Esther, discovers a plot formed against the life of Ahasuerus, upon which the conspirators are taken and hanged: Haman, the king's favourite, taking a disgust against Mordecai, endeavours to seek his life. Haman gives a false representation to the king of the Jews in his dominions; upon which he issues a decree, ordering them all, on a certain day, to be put to death. Mordecai, bewailing the fate of himself and countrymen; applies to Esther, beseeching her to intercede with the king in their behalf. The queen, at first, refuses to engage in the business, but, at length, promises to do it, though at the hazard of her life. She invites the king, with his favourite Haman, to a banquet. Haman shews farther indignation against Mordecai, and causes a gibbet to be erected fifty cubits high, intending that he should be hung on it the next morning. Haman is compelled to perform a servile office to Mordecai. The king and Haman attending at a second banquet made by the queen, she addresses herself to the king in favour of the Jews. The king, understanding the infamy of Haman, orders him to be hanged on the gallows he had erected for the execution of Mordecai, after which he promotes the latter to great honours. The decree which Ahasuerus made against the Jews is rendered ineffectual by the issuing out another, whereby the Jews are allowed to defend themselves against those who should attempt to injure them on the day appointed for the execution of the first decree. In consequence of this the Jews kill great numbers of their enemies, and hang the ten sons of Haman upon the same gallows on which their father suffered. The Jews, in memory of this deliverance, keep a feast, which they call the Feast of Lots.

PREVIOUS to Esther's first going to the Persian court, Mordecai had given her a strict charge not to discover that she was a Jew, lest the king should despise her for being a captive: this caution she carefully observed, by which not the least suspicion was conceived but that she was a native of the country. Mordecai also, for the same reason, concealed his being related to her, contenting himself with the employment he had at court till a more favourable opportunity should present itself.

A short time after Ahasuerus had married Esther, Mordecai had the good fortune to discover a conspiracy, which two of the king's chamberlains were forming against his life; and which they had concerted in revenge for his having divorced Vashti. Mordecai communicated the discovery he had made to the queen, who acquainted the king with it, telling him at the same time from whom she had received the intelligence. In consequence of this the conspirators were apprehended, and being found guilty, after a proper examination, were put to death. But, though the whole affair was recorded in the Persian annals, yet Mordecai's services on this occasion were, for the present, forgot, till his future merit, and some singular oc-

currences that afterwards took place, brought them to the king's recollection.

Among those about the king was one Haman, (a descendant of Agag, king of Amalek, in the time of Saul) who, by his insinuating mode of address, had so wrought himself in favour of the king, that all the servants at court were ordered to shew him the most distinguished reverence and respect. These orders were strictly obeyed by all except Mordecai, who, as Haman passed to and fro took no more notice of him than he did of the rest of those who were in the king's immediate service. This exasperated the proud Amalekite to the highest degree*; and being informed that Mordecai was a Jew, he formed the most horrid plot for indulging his resentment that could have been projected, being resolved, if possible, not only to destroy him, but all the Jews within the Persian dominions.

The base Haman, fearful lest some danger might attend so bold an undertaking, was very cautious how he proceeded on the business, and therefore called together his diviners, in order to find out which would be the most lucky day for carrying his design into execution. At this time, the method of divination practised in the east

* It is the opinion of some that Mordecai was no more than a common porter at the gate of the palace; but nothing can be more improbable, for Xenophon tells us, that Cyrus ordered all the great officers of state to attend at the gate of his palace; and therefore we may naturally conclude, that although this man was not the prime minister, yet his rank at court was a very high one. Herodotus, and many other Greek historians, confirm what is advanced by Xenophon; and, both in Turkey and China, even in the present age, according to all modern travellers, the great officers of state have apartments near the gate of the palace, where they wait till called for.

* We are told by Josephus, that Haman, taking notice

of this singularity in Mordecai, asked him what countryman he was? and finding him to be a Jew, he broke out into a violent exclamation against the insolence of such a wretch, who, when all the natives of the free-born Persians made no hesitation at doing him the honour commanded by the king, he should presume to disobey; and that, in this fit of rage, he took the desperate resolution, not only to be revenged on Mordecai, but to destroy the whole race of Jews in the Persian dominions. He might, indeed, be farther induced to carry his design into execution from recollecting that his ancestors, the Amalekites, had been formerly beaten out of the land, and exterminated by the Jews.

east was, to cast lots. This was therefore accordingly done, and having first tried each month, and then each day in every month, they came at length to a determination that the thirteenth day of the twelfth month †, which is called Adar, would be the most fortunate for carrying his design into execution.

Haman, pleased with what the diviners had done, immediately went to the king, and, in a long harangue, endeavoured, in the most forcible manner he was able, to prejudice him against the Jews, and thereby effect his diabolical intentions. He told the king there was a certain people dispersed throughout his empire, who called themselves Jews, and who, having laws and ordinances of their own, despised all his edicts and injunctions; that, in short, their principles tended to the disturbance of the good order of his government, and the preservation of all uniformity: that, on these accounts, it was not consistent with the rules of policy to allow them any farther toleration; and therefore he proposed that they should be destroyed and extirpated out of the Persian empire; and, lest the loss of so many subjects should be thought to diminish the king's revenue, he proposed making up the defect out of his own private fortune. *If it please the king, said he, let it be written that they may be destroyed: I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasuries.*

Ahasuerus was so wrought on by this wretched and debased favourite, that no sooner had he heard his tale, than he gave immediate consent for all the Jews to be put to death within his dominions, and ordered his scribes to form a decree ‡ for that purpose, to which he affixed his own signet. He sent copies of this decree by posts § to all the lieutenants and governors of provinces within his dominions, with strict charge that they should destroy, and cause to be killed, all the Jews, of whatsoever sex or condition, both young and old, that were any where within their jurisdiction, on the thirteenth day of the month Adar next ensuing.

† It was in the first month of the year when the diviners began to cast lots, and the time for the execution of the Jews was, by these lots, not to take place till the last month of the year, which plainly shews, that *though the lot be cast into the lap, yet the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord*, Prov. xvi. 33. Hence, almost a whole year intervened between the design and the time appointed for its execution, which gave Mordecai the opportunity of making it known to the queen, that she might intercede, and thereby prevent the conspiracy taking place.

‡ The decree itself, according to Josephus, was to this effect:

“ The great King Artaxerxes, to the hundred and seven and twenty Governors of the Provinces, between India and Ethiopia, Greeting.

“ Whereas it hath pleased God to give me the command of so many nations, and a dominion over the rest of the world, as large as I myself desire, I being resolved to do nothing, that may be tyrannical or grievous towards my people, and to bear a gentle and easy hand over them, with an eye more especially to the preservation of their peace and liberties, and to settle them in a state of tranquillity and happiness, not to be shaken: All this I have taken into mature deliberation; and, being given to understand by my trusty and well-beloved friend and counsellor,

It is little to be wondered at that the publication of this horrid decree should occasion an universal grief and lamentation among the Jews in all parts, particularly in the city of Shushan, from whence it was issued. Mordecai was so affected, that he put on sackcloth, covered his head with ashes, and went through the streets in this manner till he came to the gate of the palace, where he was obliged to stop, no man being permitted to pass it in such a dress. Intelligence of this coming to the ears of the queen (who was a stranger to the passing of the decree) she sent a messenger to Mordecai, begging him to lay aside that mournful habit, and put on other clothes, such as was consistent with his situation; but he told the messenger he could not comply with the queen's request till the cause of his melancholy appearance was removed. In consequence of this answer the queen sent Hetach, one of the king's eunuchs, to learn of Mordecai the reason of his taking on him such an appearance; on which he related the particulars of the king's order for the destruction of the Jews, and what a sum of Money Haman had offered the king for the grant. He then gave Hetach a copy of the decree, desiring him to present it to the queen, and to intreat her immediately to use her utmost interest with the king to spare the lives of her people.

This message Hetach faithfully delivered to the queen, who immediately returned an answer to Mordecai, in which she excused herself from engaging in the affair for this reason, because an ordinance had been passed, inhibiting any person, whether man or woman, on pain of death, from approaching the king's presence without a special order. *All the king's servants (said she) and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live; but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days.*

Mordecai, in his reply to this, told the queen, that

“ Haman, a person of a tried faith, prudence, and justice, and whom I esteem above all others, that there is a mixture of a sort of inhuman people among my subjects, that take upon them to govern by their own laws, and to prescribe ways to themselves, in contempt of public order and government; men depraved both in their customs, and in their manners, and enemies not only to monarchy, but to the methods of our royal administration: This is therefore to will and require, that, upon notice given you, by Haman (who is to me as a father) of the persons intended by this my proclamation, you put all the said persons, men, women, and children, to the sword, without any commiseration or favour, in a strict pursuance of my decree. And it is my further command, that you put this in execution upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month of the present year, to make but one day's work of the destruction of all mine, and your enemies in order to a future peace and security of all our lives after.”

§ The establishing of posts, by which letters are conveyed from one place to another, is of great antiquity, and according to Diodorus Siculus, was first brought into use by the Persian kings, though it is certain that its course was greatly interrupted in succeeding ages. It is, however, probable, that, during the reigns of the Persian kings, no letters were sent by what is now called the post, but such as were of a public nature, and in which the more immediate officers of government were chiefly entrusted.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



QUEEN ESTHER fainting before KING ARTAXERXES

that the decree extended to the whole Jewish nation, without any exception: that if it came to be executed she must no more expect to escape than the rest: that God, very probably, had raised her to her present greatness on purpose that she might be the means of saving and protecting his people; but that if she neglected to do this, and their deliverance should come some other way, then would she, and her father's house, by the righteous and just judgments of God, most certainly perish.

This message roused Esther, who immediately dispatched Hatach to Mordecai with this order and promise: that he, and all the Jews in Shushan, should fast three days (as she intended to do herself) and offer up their humble supplications to God that he would prosper her in so hazardous an undertaking, at the expiration of which time she would not fail to address the king, though at the hazard of her life.

This injunction, being properly circulated by Mordecai, it was strictly observed by all the Jews in Shushan. Esther did the like, and failed not taking proper measures for fulfilling her engagement. On the third day she dressed herself in her royal apparel, and went to the king's apartment, where he was sitting upon his throne, in the inner part of the palace. As soon as she saw the king, whose countenance expressed displeasure, she immediately fainted away, and would have fallen to the ground had she not been supported by one of her maids who attended. The king, seeing her in this situation, descended from his throne, and raising her up, bade her be of good cheer. He then laid his golden sceptre on her neck (which was a mark of his affection) and after having embraced her, asked what request she had to make, telling her at the same time that whatever it was he would grant it, though it should cost him half his kingdom. Upon this Esther told him all she desired at present was, that he (accompanied by Haman) would come to a banquet, which she had prepared for him. This invitation the king readily accepted, and the more so, on account of her having invited his favourite Haman, who, happening at this time not to be at court, the king sent for him, with orders not to fail attending the invitation of the queen.

When the entertainment was nearly over, with which the king expressed the highest satisfaction, he asked Esther again, what request she had to make, repeating his former promises, that whatever it should be, he would grant it, though it were half his kingdom. The queen, not thinking this a proper time to open the secret to the king, told him that her desire at present was no more than that he and Haman would favour her again the next day with their company at a like

entertainment, and that then she would not fail to disclose to him her request.

The distinguished honour conferred on Haman, in being the only person, except the king, invited to the queen's banquet, so increased his pride, that he expected nothing less than a respect and homage to be paid him as the second person in the kingdom. Nor were his expectations ill founded except in the person of Mordecai, who, as he passed him at the palace-gate, on his return, refused to pay him the least obedience. As soon as Haman got home, he recounted to his family the great esteem in which he was held not only by the king, but likewise the queen, he having been at a banquet provided by the latter; that no other person accompanied the king on the occasion but himself; and that the next day he was to be present at a like invitation. He could not, however, forbear complaining of the affront and disrespect which Mordecai had put upon him: "But, said he, what pleasure is all this, so long as I see the hated Mordecai, who pays me no respect, sitting at the king's gate?" His friends and relations, joining with him in their resentment against Mordecai, advised him immediately to order a gibbet to be erected fifty cubits high, and the very next morning to go to the king, and obtain a grant from him that Mordecai should be hanged on it. This advice was perfectly agreeable to Haman, who, imagining the king would not refuse his request, gave orders for the gibbet to be immediately erected.

But God was pleased to direct things in such a manner as totally to frustrate the design of the proud and cruel Haman; and when he went to court the next morning he found matters turn out very different to what he had expected. It happened that the king that morning awoke much sooner than usual, and not being able to compose himself again to sleep, he called for the annals of his reign, and ordered a person, who was then in waiting, to read them to him. He accordingly obeyed the king's orders, and went on till he came to the passage, which made mention of Mordecai's discovery of the treason of the two chamberlains; and when the king, upon enquiry, was given to understand, that the man, for so signal a service had not received any reward*, he seemed exceeding angry, and asked who waited without. Being told Haman, (who had been some time waiting for admittance to get his ends obtained on Mordecai) he ordered him in, and immediately asked him this question: *What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?*

Haman, vainly supposing that himself was meant, gave the king this advice: *For the man, said he, whom the king delighteth to honour, let the royal*

* Josephus tells us, that when the clerk or secretary read the names of those who had done signal services to the king, he added what rewards had been bestowed upon them; and that as Ahasuerus was more than ordinarily attentive to what was read at this time, he could not help being surprized that Mordecai, who had discovered a dangerous conspiracy, and consequently prevented a revolution, had not been taken notice of. But it is in vain to enquire, why a man who had done so much for the safety of the king, should have been so long neglected; for it has often happened, that those who do most to serve the state are left unnoticed, while the mean-

est and most debased wretches shall have honours heaped upon them.

† Some commentators have objected to what is here said concerning the crown being set upon his head, because it is well known that it was death in Persia for any person except the king, to wear the crown, even for a single moment. To this it is answered, that the objection is founded on a misconstruction of the words; for the crown here alluded to was not the royal diadem worn by the kings, but only an ornament put upon the head of the horse. And that this is the sense of the words appear evident from the concurring testimonies

royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal † which is set upon his head: and let his apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour.

No sooner had Haman delivered his advice than the king, quite contrary to his expectations, bade him get the horse, apparel and diadem ready, and do just as he had said to Mordecai, charging him not to fail in the least part of it. Make haste, said he, and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate: let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken.

This cut the proud Haman to the heart, his thoughts having been wholly employed on his own advancement. But the king's word was a law, and he knew there was no disputing it. Being therefore obliged to comply he attended Mordecai in the manner himself had prescribed, proclaiming, as he led the horse through the streets of the city, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour.

When the irksome ceremony was over Haman returned home, lamenting the disappointment and great mortification he had met with in being forced to pay so signal an honour to his most hated enemy. But while he was relating this to his family, and they thereupon expressing some uneasy apprehensions, as if this was a very bad omen, one of the queen's chamberlain's came to his house to hasten him to the banquet; and, having seen the gallows, which had been set up the night before, he fully informed himself of the intent for which it was prepared.

When the king and Haman were set down to the entertainment, the king asked Esther again, what her request was, at the same time renewing his promise that he would not fail to grant it her, even though it should extend to the half of his kingdom. Esther, rising from her seat, delivered her petition in words to this effect: "My petition, O king, said she, is for my own life, and the lives of my people, because there is a design laid against us, not to make us bond-men and bond-women (for then I

should have been silent) but to slay and destroy all. If therefore I have found favour in thy sight, O king, let my life, and the life of my people, be given at my request."

The king no sooner heard Esther's petition, than he asked, with some commotion, who it was that durst do any such thing. Who is he? (said he) and where is he that durst presume in his heart to do so? The queen replied, The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman. The king, rising up in great passion, immediately left the apartment, and retired into the garden, in order to give vent to his resentment. Haman, seeing his danger, took this opportunity of supplicating his life from the queen, which he did by falling prostrate on the bed ‡ where she was sitting. At this juncture the king returned, and, finding the position Haman was in, he hastily exclaimed, Will he force the queen also before me in the house? The attendants without hearing this entered the apartment, and immediately covered Haman's face, as a token of the king's indignation against him. The chamberlain, who had been sent to call Haman to the banquet, then informed the king of the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai, who had saved the king's life; upon which he gave immediate orders that he should be hanged thereon (which accordingly was done) and his whole estate given to the queen, who appointed Mordecai as her steward. At the same time she informed the king of her near relation to Mordecai, upon which he took him into his royal favour, advanced him to great power, riches and dignity in the empire, and made him keeper of the royal signet.

But though Haman was thus removed, yet the decree which he had procured for the destruction of the Jews remained still in force; nor could it be repealed, because the laws of the Medes and Persians were such, that whatever was written in the king's name, and signed with the royal signet, could not be reversed. The queen presented a second petition to the king, requesting that the decree might be cancelled; but this, for the reason already given, could not be complied with. All, therefore, that the king could do was, to grant the Jews, by another decree, such power to defend themselves against all who should assault them on the day when the former decree was to be executed, as might render it, in a great measure, ineffectual. To this purpose, a fresh edict

was

monies of many ancient historians, and is confirmed by what has been written by Grotius, Le Clerc, bishop Patrick, and many others.

† In all the eastern nations, even to this day, the people lean on a couch while they eat, and Esther being at that time in the same position, Haman took the opportunity of prostrating himself before her, and, according to the custom of the Persians, embraced her feet. It cannot be imagined that Haman could, at such a time, attempt to violate the chastity of the queen; but the resentment of Ahasuerus was then so great, that he laid hold of this circumstance in order to give a plausible colour to what he intended to do. With respect to the covering of Haman's face, it was consistent with the practice of the people of the east from the most early ages of time; for when a criminal was brought before a judge, or his sovereign, to receive sentence, his face was always covered, lest the natural emotions of his grief should operate too strongly in his favour.

‡ Copies of this edict, or decree, were written, and sent to all the provinces throughout the king's dominions; the substance of which, as related by Josephus, was as follows:

ARTAXERXES the Great King to his faithful Governors, greeting.

"It is too general a practice for men whose fortune hath been greater than their merit, to insult both their inferiors and benefactors, and extinguish, as far as in their power, all sense of gratitude and benevolence: they likewise pervert the power bestowed to the discredit of them who gave it; and this under such disguises as if God could not penetrate them. Nor is it any new matter for favourites by the misrepresentation of men and things, to gratify their private passions to the injury of their masters; and thus endanger the lives of honest men by their ill offices with the prince. This I declare not on the credit of report or history, but on perfect demonstration within my own knowledge. For the future therefore let no regard be paid to slanderous accusations, but let facts be carefully enquired into, and let full proof of the innocence or guilt of the party acquit or condemn him.

"You are not unacquainted with Haman's not being a Persian, but an Amalekite by extraction, nor how affectionately

was drawn up in the third month; empowering the Jews, on the day appointed by Haman for their destruction, to gather themselves together; and whoever should make any attempt to interrupt or injure them, they should put to death. This edict was signed by the king, and copies of it went by post to the governors of every province throughout his dominions.

Soon after the king had put his royal signet to this decree, Mordecai came out of the palace dressed in the royal robe, gown and chain; the sight of whom gave the highest satisfaction to the Jews, who thereby imagined themselves safe, and that Haman's decree against them would prove of none effect. Those Jews, likewise, who resided in the different parts of the king's dominions, when they heard the contents of the king's last decree, were elated with joy, and some of the natives, thinking themselves in danger, underwent circumcision, supposing that might be a means of securing them should the Jews become predominant.

But the greater part of the Persians were resolved to abide by the decree of Haman, so that when the thirteenth day of Adar came, a war was commenced between them and the Jews throughout the whole Persian empire. As the rulers of the several provinces, and other officers of the king, well understood what power and credit Esther and Mordecai then had with him, they so favoured the Jews in all parts, that, on that day, they slew, in the whole empire, seventy five thousand persons; and in the city of Shushan, on that day and the succeeding one, eight hundred more. Among these were the ten sons of Haman, who, by a special order from the king, were hung on the gibbet that had been erected by their father, and on which himself was executed.

This put an end to all attempts of the Persians against the Jews, the latter of whom, in memory of their wonderful deliverance, afterwards kept a great festival on the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month Adar, which they called the *Days of Purim*, or *Feast of Lots*. Mordecai continued in great credit with the king and queen, and so directed public affairs, that the Jews lived happy and uninterrupted during the whole course of his administration.

The Feast of *Purim*, or *Lots* (which took its rise from the circumstances before related) is, to this very day, celebrated by the Jews with some peculiar ceremonies, the chief of which may be

reduced to these three things, viz. *Reading, Resting and Feasting*. Previous to the *reading*, which is performed in the synagogue, and begins in the evening as soon as the stars appear, they make use of three forms of prayer. In the *first* of these they praise God for counting them worthy to attend Divine service: in the second they thank him for the miraculous preservation of their ancestors: and in the third they bless his holy name for having continued their lives to the celebration of another festival in commemoration of it. They then read over the whole history of Haman from the beginning to the end; but not out of any printed book (for that is not lawful) but from an Hebrew manuscript, written on parchment. There are five places in the text, wherein the reader raises his voice with all his might. When he comes to the place that mentions the names of the ten sons of Haman, he repeats them very quick, to shew that they were all soon destroyed; and every time that the name of Haman is pronounced, all the congregation, with great fury, strike against the benches of the synagogue with mallets they bring for that purpose. After the reading is finished they return home, and have a supper not of flesh, but of spoon-meat; and early the next morning they arise and return to the synagogue, where, after a passage read in Exodus, which makes mention of the war of Amalek, they begin again to read the book of Esther, with the same ceremonies as before; and then conclude the service with curses against Haman and his wife Zeresh, with blessings upon Mordecai and Esther, and with praises to God for having preserved his people.

The reason of this festival being kept two days together is this:—the Jews at Shushan had two days allowed them to revenge themselves of their enemies (Esther ix. 13.) but the rest of the Jews, in other parts of the kingdom, had but one. This at first caused some difference in their time of feasting; for the Jews, in all the distant parts, having done execution on their enemies on the thirteenth day, kept their rejoicing feast on the fourteenth; but the Jews at Shushan, being engaged in this work both on the thirteenth and fourteenth days, kept their festival the fifteenth. When Mordecai, however, had made a record of this great deliverance, he sent letters to all the Jews throughout the king's dominions, to establish it as a standing ordinance among them, that both the fourteenth and fifteenth of the month Adar every year, should be kept as the days whereon

"tionately I have treated, and what honour done this man,
"having called, and regarded him as my father, ordering
"my subjects to obey him next to myself. Now his pride
"had induced him to depart from his duty, and prompted
"him to think of succeeding to the government,
"by the destruction of Mordecai, to whom I owe
"my life; and likewise to destroy the queen; the end of
"his plot being to usurp my authority, when his plans against
"the lives of my friends had succeeded."
"Wherefore as the designs of this man to destroy the Jews
"are notorious, I hereby certify, that, far from finding
"them seditious according to his report, I approve of them
"as a people worshipping that God to whom I and my family
"owe the possession and support of our dominions.
"These letters are therefore to command that you do not
"exercise, in full force, that severity on the Jews as com-
"manded by Haman, whom, as a sacrifice to justice, I

"have caused to be executed on a gibbet before the gates
"of Shushan.
"And I further command that copies of these letters be
"transmitted throughout my dominions, that the Jews may
"enjoy their laws in peace; and that you afford them help
"against those who oppress them. And as the thirteenth
"day of the twelfth month (Adar) is fixed for the extirpa-
"tion of these people, it is my will that you fix on this time
"as the moment of their deliverance; assured that this
"proceeding will satisfy my friends, and afford a cautionary
"example to future traitors. Be it farther known to the
"parties herein concerned, in all our cities and towns, that
"military execution shall be the consequence of disobedience
"to these commands, of which all our subjects are to take
"notice; and the Jews shall be ready to avenge themselves
"on their enemies at the time appointed."

whereon the Jews rested from their enemies: and this is the reason why the festival, at the present time, continues for two days, though the former only is kept with great solemnity.

It may not be improper here to take some notice of the origin of the Jews synagogues, the nature of their construction, and the mode of Divine service performed in them, not only at their first institution, but even the present time.

The learned are not a little divided concerning the rise and antiquity of the Jewish synagogues. Some contend that they were in use under the tabernacle and first temple, whilst others assert, that they had no being until the times of the captivity. The former, in behalf of their opinion, urge, that as in the wilderness, the court of the tabernacle could not contain the hundredth part of the worshippers of the God of Israel, and, as in the Promised Land, the temple was too far distant for devout persons of every tribe to resort to it every sabbath-day, there was a necessity for other places to be appointed for the service of God, that the sense of religion might not be extinguished and lost. To this purpose they observe, that the Levites were dispersed in several cities, and the prophets, and sons of the prophets settled in their respective colleges, that they might be ready at hand, upon all occasions, to expound the law, and instruct the people in their duty, whenever they met together for that purpose. And therefore, we find the Shunamite's husband thus expostulating with his wife, *Wherefore wilt thou go to him to-day? it is neither new moon, nor sabbath*, 2 Kings iv. 23. which seems to imply, that at such stated seasons as these the custom was, to resort to such teachers for instruction, and, if this was the custom, there must have been proper places appointed for their reception.

These are the principal arguments in favour of synagogues being used while the first temple was standing, but the silence of scripture seems to be a strong confutation of them: for, had these places of religious worship been in use among the Jews before the captivity, we cannot conceive why there should not have been as frequent mention made of them in the Old Testament as there is in the New. The common, therefore, and indeed the most probable opinion is, that there were no such things as synagogues built before the captivity of Babylon and the destruction of the temple: that the Jews, seeing themselves carried away into a strange country, where they had no temple for Divine service, came to the resolution of building such houses as were afterwards called Synagogues, there to be instructed in the law, and to worship the God of their fathers, in the best manner they could on every sabbath day; and that, upon their return, finding the great convenience of such kind of buildings, they erected the same in their own country as they had done before in the land of their captivity, and herein were followed by the rest of the Jews in all parts whither they were dispersed.

The Synagogues were built sometimes within the city, and sometimes without, but always on some elevated spot. They were usually raised above any private house, because the Jews have

a notion that it is a dishonour to God to have his house inferior, nay, so much as equal to those of men. Nearly in the center of the building is a desk, or pulpit, (made very probably in imitation of that we read Ezra made use of, Nehemiah viii. 4.) from whence the book, or roll of the law, is read with great solemnity, and from whence both he that expounds it, or he that preaches to the congregation at any time, always delivers himself. At the upper end of the Synagogue, opposite the entrance, is a chest, or press, in which is kept the book of the law, wrapped in a fine embroidered cloth; and, during the time of Divine service, the women are separated from the men, and seated in a gallery inclosed with lattices.

Every town wherein there were ten *Batalnim*, that is, ten persons of full age and free condition, always at leisure on week days as well as sabbaths, to attend Divine service, was thought large enough to have a synagogue built in it. But, if ten such could not be found, it was thought not proper, because the Jewish notion was, that less than such a number could not make a congregation, and, without a congregation, no part of the synagogue service could be performed.

But as their notion was farther, that any person, Gentile as well as Jew, might be permitted to erect a synagogue, because the holiness of the place (as they thought) consisted not so much in the fabric as in its being set apart to holy uses, it thence came to pass, that though there were but few at first, yet in process of time they became so numerous that, in Our Saviour's time, there was no town in Judea but what had one or more in it: that, in Tiberias, a city of Galilee, there were no less than twelve, and (if we may credit the Jews) four hundred and eighty in Jerusalem. The buildings were made much in the same manner as the bodies of our churches, and had over their doors or entrance the following inscription: *This is the gate of the Lord, the Righteous shall enter into it.* And upon the walls within were these, or such like sentences: *Remember thy Creator. Keep thy foot when thou goest into the House of the Lord. Silence is commendable in the time of prayer. And prayers without attention, are like a body without a soul, &c.*

In the service of the synagogue the first office was prayer. Their prayers at first were few, but have since greatly increased, which makes the service much longer than it was originally. What they reckon the most solemn part of their prayers is that which they call *Shemenah Ebreth*, that is, the eighteen prayers, which, according to them, were composed and instituted by Ezra and the great synagogue; and therefore they enjoin all that are of age, of what sex or condition soever, either in private or public, to repeat them three times a day, and on every synagogue-day they offer them up, with the greatest solemnity, in their public assemblies.

That some judgment may be formed of the merit of these prayers, we shall insert the first ten, which have been translated by a very learned hand, and placed in the same order as they stand in the Jewish liturgies. They are as follow:

I. Blessed be thou, O Lord, our God, the God of our Fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of

of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the great God, powerful and tremendous; the High God, bountifully dispensing benefits; the Creator and Possessor of the universe, who rememberest the good deeds of our fathers, and in thy love sendest a redeemer to those, who are descended from them, for thy name's sake, O king, our helper, our Saviour, and our shield. Blessed art thou, our Lord, who art the shield of Abraham.

II. Thou, O Lord, art powerful for ever. Thou raisest the dead to life, and art mighty to save. Thou sendest down the dew, stillest the winds, and makest the rain to come down upon the earth, and sustaineest with thy beneficence all that live therein; and, of thy abundant mercy, makest the dead again to live. Thou helpest up those that fall; thou curest the sick; thou loosest them that are bound, and makest good thy word of truth to those, that sleep in the dust. Who is to be compared to thee, O thou Lord of Might? And who is like unto thee, O our king, who killest, and makest alive, and makest salvation to spring up, as the herb out of the field? Thou art faithful, to make the dead rise again to life. Blessed art thou, O God, who raisest the dead to life.

III. Thou art Holy, and thy name is Holy, and thy saints do praise thee every day. Selah. For a great king and an holy one art thou, O God. Blessed art thou, O Lord, God most holy.

IV. Thou, of thy mercy, givest knowledge to men, and teachest them understanding; give graciously unto us knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who graciously givest knowledge unto men.

V. Bring us back, O our father, to the observance of thy law, and make us to adhere to thy precepts; and do thou, O our king, draw us near to thy worship, and convert us unto thee by perfect repentance in thy presence. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who vouchsafest to receive us by repentance.

VI. Be thou merciful to us, O our father, for we have sinned; pardon us, O our king, for we have transgressed against thee, for thou art a God, good, and ready to pardon. Blessed art thou, O Lord most gracious, who multipliest thy mercies in the forgiveness of sins.

VII. Look, we beseech thee, upon our afflictions: Be thou on our side, in all our contentions; and plead thou our cause in all our litigations; and make haste to redeem us with a perfect redemption, for thy name's sake: for thou art our God, our king, and a strong Redeemer. Blessed art thou, O Lord, the redeemer of Israel.

VIII. Heal us, O Lord, our God, and we shall be healed; save us, and we shall be saved; for thou art our praise. Bring unto us sound health, and a perfect remedy for all our infirmities, for all our griefs, and for all our wounds; for thou art a God, who healest, and art merciful. Blessed art thou, O Lord, our God, who curest the diseases of thy people Israel.

IX. Bless us, O Lord, our God, in every work of our hands, and bless unto us the seasons of the year, and give us the dew, and the rain to be a blessing unto us upon the face of all our land, and satisfy the world with thy blessings, and

send down moisture upon every part of the earth, that is habitable. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who givest thy blessing to the years.

X. Convocate us together by the sound of the great trumpet, to the enjoyment of our liberty; and lift up thy ensigns to call together all of the captivity, from the four quarters of the earth, to our own land. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who gatherest together the exiles of the people of Israel.

These prayers, however, are but of the same nature that the Lord's Prayer is in our public service, that is, the fundamental, and principal part; for, besides these, they have some prayers that go before, some that follow after, and others interspersed between them.

In the course of the service there are three things read, namely, the *Shema*, the *Law*, and the *Prophets*. The *Shema* consists of three portions of scripture: the first is, from the beginning of the fourth verse of the 6th chapter of Deuteronomy, to the end of the 9th verse: the second, from the beginning of the 13th verse of the xith chapter of Deuteronomy to the end of the 21st verse: and the third, from the beginning of the 37th verse of the xvth chapter of Numbers, to the end of the chapter. And because the first of these portions, in the Hebrew Bible, begins with the word *Shema*, that is, *Hear*, therefore the reading of the whole is called *the reading of the Shema*, which, next to their saying of the *Shemoneth-Esketh*, or the eighteen prayers, is reckoned the most solemn part of their religious service.

The five books of the Law were divided by Ezra into fifty-four sections, because, in their *intercalated* years, there were fifty-four sabbaths, and therefore, a section being read every sabbath-day completed the whole in the space of a year; but when the year was not thus intercalated, those who had the direction of the synagogue worship, reduced the sections to the number of sabbaths, by joining too short ones, in several places, into one, because they held themselves obliged to have the whole law, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Deuteronomy, read over, in this manner every year.

During the persecution of the Jews, in the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, when the reading of the law was prohibited, instead of the fifty-four sections of it, the Jews substituted fifty-four sections of the prophets, which were afterwards continued; so that when the reading of the law was restored by the Maccabees, the section, which was read every sabbath, out of the law, served for the *first* lesson; and the section out of the prophets for the *second*; and this is the meaning of St. Paul's *standing up to preach after the reading of the law and the prophets* (Acts xiii. 16.) that is, after the reading of the *first* lesson out of the law, and the *second* lesson out of the prophets.

With the reading of the law and the prophets was always added an exposition of them: for, after the Hebrew language had ceased to be the mother tongue of the Jews, and the Chaldee grew into use instead of it, the custom of the synagogue was, that one should first read a part of the scriptures to the people in the Hebrew tongue, and then another interpret it into the

Chaldee,

Chaldee, which they better understood. And this appears to be the reason why these sections of Scripture came to be divided into verses, viz. that by these means the reader might certainly know how much he was to read, and the interpreter how much he was to interpret at every interval.

The reading and expounding being over, any person of learning and knowledge in the Scriptures might address himself to the people, upon what moral or divine subject he thought proper; only we may observe that this was a compliment usually paid to strangers, and therefore, when St. Paul and his company arrived at Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the place of Divine worship on the sabbath-day, *after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.* Acts xiii. 15.

The ministration of the synagogue-service (from what has been said) evidently appears not to have been confined to the sacerdotal order. The priests were consecrated only to the service of the temple, which was of a very different nature, consisting chiefly in the offering up of sacrifices and oblations; but to this in the synagogue any one who, by learning, appeared properly qualified, was readily admitted. Only, for the preservation of order, there were in every synagogue some fixed officers, whose business it was to take care that all religious duties were therein decently performed.

The first of this kind are those whom the scriptures of the New Testament call *Rulers of the Synagogue*: but how many of these belonged to each synagogue we cannot tell, only we may presume, that there were more than one, because they are mentioned in the plural number in respect of the same synagogue. Next to them (and perhaps one of them) was the minister of the synagogue, whose business it was to offer up to God the public prayers of the congregation; and being for this purpose delegated (as it were) by them to God, is therefore, in the Hebrew language, called Sheliach Zibber, i. e. the Angel of the Church, or congregation; from whence the name of the bishops of the seven churches mentioned in the revelations, is manifestly borrowed. Next to this angel of the church, were the deacons, and inferior ministers of the synagogue, called in Hebrew, Chazanim, or Overseers, who, under the rulers of the synagogue, had the charge and oversight of all things in it, and kept the books of the Holy Scriptures, the liturgies, and utensils which they brought forth, and carried away again, as there was occasion: and next to these overseers was the interpreter,

whose office it was to recite, in Chaldee, the lessons (as they were read in Hebrew) to the congregation; and, because a great deal of skill in both languages was requisite for such an undertaking, whenever the rulers of the synagogue found a person fit for this purpose, they retained him by a salary, and thereby made him a standing minister among them.

The times appointed for synagogue-worship were thrice a week, exclusive of their holidays, whether fasts or festivals, and thrice on each of those days, viz. in the morning, in the afternoon, and at night. When, at any of these times, the blessing was to be given, if there was a priest present in the congregation, he always did the office; but if there was not a priest, then the Sheliach Zibber, who read the prayers, in a form of benediction made proper for him, dismissed the people.

We have only one thing more to observe on this subject, and that is, to answer a question, which it is very natural for many to ask; namely, How it came to pass that the Jews, who were so prone to idolatry before the Babylonish Captivity, should be so strongly bent against it (even to a degree of extravagance) after that captivity was ended? This cannot be imputed to any other cause, but their having the law and the prophets read to them every week after that captivity, which they had not before. Previous to the captivity, they had no synagogues for public worship or instruction, nor any places to resort to for these purposes, but either the temple at Jerusalem, or the cities of the Levites. Their duty to God was little known among them, and his laws, in a manner, wholly forgotten: and therefore, as occasions offered, they were easily drawn into all the superstitions and idolatrous practices of those heathen nations near which they lived. But when, after the Babylonish captivity, synagogues were erected in every city, to which they constantly resorted for public worship, and where, every week, they had the law *at first*, and *afterwards*, both the law and the prophets read to them; and where, by sermons and exhortations, they were, at least every sabbath-day, instructed in their duty, and excited to the performance of it. This kept them in a thorough knowledge of God and his laws, as the comminations in the prophets (when once they came to be read among them) deterred them from transgressing against them; for (as the apostle says, 2 Tim. iii. 16. 17.) *all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God (for every man that resolves to be godly) may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

C H A P. VII.

Of the Person and Boook of J O B.

AS we have not any direct account of the time in which this illustrious character lived, and as the relation is entirely of a detached nature, we could not with propriety introduce it in the preceding part of our History, and therefore have thought proper to insert it, in conformity to the compilers of the Bible, after the Book of Esther.

The Book of Job, from whence this history is taken, is divided into three very unequal parts. The first is the historical narration of the former prosperity of Job, and of the miseries with which he was afterwards afflicted: this is the subject of the two first chapters. The second part consists of the speeches between Job and his friends, which comprehends the principal body of the work. The last part, which begins at the seventh verse of the last chapter, is a short account of what followed after these conferences between Job and his friends, and which concludes the whole.

But before we proceed to relate the particulars of the life of this holy man, we must make some few observations on his descent, and the place of his residence, which have produced great controversy among the different writers on the subject.

It is the opinion of some that Job was descended from Nahor, the son of Terah, and brother of Abraham; while others will have him to be descended from Esau, and to be Jobab his great grandson. But, after all that can be said in defence of these suppositions, the most probable opinion is, that he was descended, in a direct line, from Abraham by his wife Keturah; for, by Keturah, the patriarch had several sons, whom he (being resolved to reserve the chief patrimony for Isaac) portioned out, and sent into the east to seek their fortunes, so that most of them settled in Arabia; and that Job (if not all the rest) amassed great wealth, and became particularly respected, appears from what the author of his history records of him, namely, that, before his calamities came upon him, *he was the greatest of all the men of the east.*

But, with respect to the descent of Job, it is an undoubted matter of fact, that Abraham, by his wife Keturah, had a son, whose name was Shuah; and therefore, when we read of Bildad the Shushite (Job. ii. 11.) we may very reasonably suppose that he was a descendant of that family, who, living in the neighbourhood of Uz, where Job resided, might, perhaps, think himself obliged, by the ties of consanguinity, to go and visit his relation in the day of distress.

With respect to that part of the world in which Uz lay, various opinions have been started, according to the several families from whence Job is made to descend. But, on a fixed determination that he sprang from one of Keturah's sons, his habitation must be properly placed in that part of Arabia Deserta, which has to the north Mesopotamia and the river Euphrates; to the west, Syria, Palestine, and Idumæa; and to the south, the mountains of the Happy Arabia. This description is most substantially confirmed by what is related in the history itself, namely, that the Chaldeans and Sabeans plundered his estate, it being well known that those people were inhabitants of that part of the country.

At what exact period this great sufferer lived is likewise another matter which has occasioned great controversy among the learned, though there are several criterions by which these disputes may be removed. It is evident, that he was either predecessor, or at least cotemporary with Moses, from his mentioning, with the utmost abhorrence and detestation, the antient idolatrous custom of paying Divine adoration to the sun, moon, and stars; and, which is a still greater proof, from his taking no manner of notice of the bondage of the Israelites under their cruel Egyptian task-masters, which was a circumstance of such moment and importance, that he would, doubtless, have expatiated thereon, had he not lived before that remarkable occurrence. It is evident, likewise, that he lived in the days of the patriarchs from the length of his life; for he was about three-score years of age when God, for the trial of his faith and patience, first permitted Satan to persecute and torment him with the very worst of diseases, and he lived one hundred and forty years after being restored to his health and possessions; so that he was about two hundred years old at the time of his decease, which was a much longer period than several of the patriarchs could boast to have lived.

That Job lived before the law may be gathered from his making not so much as one allusion to it through the whole course of his life, and from his offering such sacrifices in his own country as were not allowable, after the promulgation of the law, to be offered in any other place, but that *which the Lord had chose in one of the tribes of Israel*; and that he lived after Jacob may be inferred from the character given him by his Divine master, viz. that for *uprightness*, and the fear of God, there was not

like unto him upon the earth; which commendation could not be allowed to any, whilst Jacob, the favourite servant of God, was alive; nor can we suppose it proper to be given to any person even while Joseph lived, who, in moral virtues, and other excellencies, made as bright a figure as any person whatever in his time. Thus may the computation be reduced to a very narrow compass; and though it is exceeding difficult to point out the precise time, yet the general opinion is, that he lived in the time of the children of Israel's bondage, and therefore his birth may be placed about the time that Jacob went into Egypt, and the beginning of his afflictions in the year when Joseph died, at which last period of time he might justly deserve the very extraordinary character which God gave him, there not being any man alive, at that time, who, in virtue and integrity, could be compared with him.

Another matter that has occasioned some controversy among the learned is, who was the author of this book. It is supposed by some to have been written by Moses during his residence in Egypt, or else after he had fled from thence into the land of Midian, in order to encourage the Jews to bear up with fortitude and patience under their Egyptian bondage, and to induce them to put their whole trust and confidence in God, who would most certainly deliver them in his own time and way. Others are inclined to think, that this sacred book was at first a plain and simple narrative, and that the materials were drawn up either by Job himself, or some of his friends or relations, and that afterwards it fell into the hands of Moses, who first translated it from the Arabic: that, in process of time, it was transmitted down to Solomon, and that from him, it is highly probable, it received the beautiful cast in which it now appears in the Hebrew language, the first part whereof, to the beginning of the third chapter (as St. Jerome assures us) is prose indeed, but from that to the forty-second chapter, it is all composed in heroic verse, in the same manner as those two celebrated poems, the *Iliad* of Homer, and the *Æneid* of Virgil.

But whoever was the author, whether Solomon, or any other inspired writer, certain it is, that he has exerted the beauty of his art to so great a degree, that whoever reads this historical book with the least attention will soon discern, that for the dignity and grandeur of its style, and the sublimity of its thoughts; for the spirit and energy of its diction; for the variety of its characters; for the beauty of its metaphors, similes and descriptions, there is no human composition to be met with in all the records of antiquity, that, upon a fair and impartial examination, can, in any degree, be put in competition with it.

Having said thus much by way of introduction, we shall now proceed to the history itself.

In what part of the world Job * was born cannot be ascertained, but the place of his residence is supposed to have been El-paran, in the land of Uz, otherwise called Ausitis, situated in the southern part of Arabia-Deserta. He was certainly a man of great piety and virtue, as well as renowned for his honourable descent. The Almighty was pleased to bless him in so very singular a manner that his outward prosperity bore some degree of proportion to the perfections of his mind; for he not only bestowed on him a numerous issue, namely, seven sons and three daughters, but likewise great wealth, he being possessed of seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and as many she-asses, which at that time were the riches of the country where he lived; and in short, such an extensive command had he, and such a grand retinue, that he had no superior at least, if he had any equal, throughout the whole compass of the east.

To this happiness Job had the additional pleasure of seeing his children live in the strictest bonds of affection towards each other; for the sons made it a constant practice to meet at each other's houses on their respective birth-days, at which times they made grand entertainments, and never failed inviting their sisters on the occasion.

As it was customary for these annual festivals to last seven successive days, their indulgent and pious father (who was ever anxious for the happiness of his children) took particular care, at the expiration of the week, to inform them, by a special messenger, that he expected they would prepare themselves, both by fasting and prayer, for the approaching sacrifice which he proposed to offer up to God in their behalf. When they were all assembled together, pursuant to their father's orders, he rose early the next morning (the most proper time, doubtless, for such an extraordinary act of devotion) and not only prayed to God to bless them, but offered a particular burnt-offering for each of them, being apprehensive that some one or other of them might, in an unguarded hour, and in the height of their mirth, have either said or done something that might reflect a dishonour on the holy religion they professed. And this was Job's constant practice at the close of their respective festivals.

But notwithstanding Job was possessed of such great and exemplary piety, yet it was not sufficient to save him from the most severe, though unjust accusations. As there was a time set apart for Job's sons to prepare themselves for their appearance before the Almighty in their father's house, so likewise there were days appointed for the Blessed Angels themselves to approach the throne of God, and to lay before him an exact account of the administration of their respective commissions; and the devil, who is the most malicious and implacable enemy of mankind, embraced

* There is not the least doubt but this is the same person who is called Jobab by Moses, in Gen. xxxvi. 33. As to the signification of the two terms, they both aptly and peculiarly belong to the same person. Jobab, in the original Hebrew, signifies a person who is free from all care and anxiety of mind, and in the possession of all sublunary enjoy-

ments, which agrees with the former part of his character. The term Jobab, when contracted into Job, signifies a person overwhelmed with sorrow, which equally agrees with his character, when Satan had, by Divine permission, dominion over him, and plagued him with a long and uninterrupted series of misfortunes.

embraced the favourable opportunity of introducing himself among them †. The Almighty, however, in an instant, discovering the impostor, called to him, and in order to convince him, that though he was a powerful and arbitrary spirit, he was, notwithstanding, in all respects, subject to him, insisted that he should give an account of himself, and of what business he had been upon. To which he made a faint reply, with such an apparent concern and uneasiness of mind, as sufficiently testified his awful apprehension of the Almighty, and the limitation of his power. "I have been, said he; taking a circuit round the habitable globe." The Almighty then said unto Satan, *Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?* Satan, assuming his usual assurance, returned an answer to this effect: "Yes, I have. But what he does is purely the result of self-interest: it is not the pleasure he really takes in acting conformably to your commands, but the advantage which he is conscious to himself arises from his servile obedience. Have not you made him ample amends for all his trouble? Have you not protected both him and his family in such an extraordinary manner that no misfortune could possibly attend them? Whatever he undertakes is crowned with success; and have you not bestowed on him such an abundance that the country he lives in can scarcely contain his flocks and herds? I am very well assured, however, was you once to turn the scale, to exert your power to his disadvantage, and reduce him once to a lower state of life, he will then play the hypocrite no longer, but throw off the mask, and openly disdain your over-ruling Providence: and therefore, notwithstanding all his boasted virtues, he has not the gratitude in him which you and the world imagine."

The Almighty, being pleased to put the integrity of his servant Job to the test, and to set his exalted virtues in the fairest point of view, answered Satan as follows: *Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand.* As if he had said, "Since you have thus unjustly aspersed the man, who is perfectly guiltless, and will maintain his integrity to the last under the most abject poverty, with the same strictness and sincerity as he does now while under my protection, I will for once withhold my hand, and give you full power and authority to dispose of all his substance at your will and pleasure, but upon this express condition, that you presume not to touch his person."

† Though the grand accuser of mankind, as here represented, appeared in the presence of God the Father, in order to calumniate his most faithful servant, and one of the most righteous men then on the earth, yet his insolence cannot be said to be greater than it was afterwards, when he presented himself before God the Son in the wilderness, and assaulted him with a train of the most audacious temptations he ever practised. Both attempts, however, ended in his own confusion; and God's infinite goodness was illustrated, in the most conspicuous manner, by the envy and malice of so implacable a spirit.

Satan, pleased with this unexpected commission, immediately withdrew, fully resolved to satiate his revenge on this favourite of the Almighty; nor was it long before an opportunity offered for carrying his design into execution. It happened soon after to be the birth-day of Job's eldest son, on which the whole family, according to custom, were assembled at his house, in order to indulge themselves in their accustomed gaiety, without restriction or reserve, and without the least apprehension of any danger. This was the critical conjuncture for Satan to enter upon his inhuman and merciless project, which he executed in the following manner.

In the first place he animated a clan of robbers to ravage that part of Job's land which lay nearest to them. These sons of violence instantly obeyed his orders, and Job soon received a very melancholy account of this his first misfortune in words to this effect: "As your oxen were plowing in the fields, and your asses were grazing in the adjacent meadows, the Sabeans have made an incursion on your territories, and carried away your substance along with them, having first put every person to the sword, in the most barbarous and inhuman manner; that were employed in your service, except myself, who by flight have escaped to bring you the unwelcome news of so sudden and unexpected a calamity."

This messenger had but just finished his tale when a second arrived with the melancholy tidings that there had just happened a most violent storm of hail, rain, thunder and lightning, in the pastures where his sheep and oxen were inclosed; in which not only the cattle, but all the shepherds and herdsmen were destroyed; and that he was the sole surviving person to acquaint him with this fatal disaster.

No sooner had this second messenger done speaking than a third arrived, with news that the Chaldeans, another clan of robbers, had divided themselves into several parties, and made an inroad into a very material part of his territories; that they had not only driven away his camels, but had slain their keepers, and that himself only was preserved to bring him the melancholy intelligence.

Before this third messenger had quitted the apartment, a fourth came in with more fatal tidings than all the rest, informing him that, as his children were feasting according to their usual custom, in their elder brother's house, there arose such a whirlwind all on a sudden from the desert, that it took away the four corners of the house †, and laid it at once in ruins; and that

† Some atheistical critics have objected to this circumstance, and observed, with an air of contempt and ridicule, how inconsistent it is with the course of nature to suppose that the wind could smite the four corners of the house at the same time. In answer to this, we shall make it appear evident that it was a natural event, and that hurricanes of the like nature were frequent in the country where Job resided. The tempest, or storm, here spoken of, was one of those terrible whirlwinds which came from the wilderness, that is to say, from that part of it called, by way of eminence, Arabia-Deserta. Now it is to be observed that, by all

that not a single person escaped but himself to give an account of so dreadful a desolation.

Job heard the three first narrations without shewing the least discomposure of mind; but this last so ruffled him that, like a tender and indulgent parent, he expressed the inward anguish of his soul by his outward actions. In the first place he rent his mantle, then shaved his head, and at length fell prostrate on the ground. In all this, however, he did not answer Satan's expectations; for, notwithstanding this complication of calamities, these successive scenes of sorrow, yet he most devoutly paid his tribute of adoration to his God; and, to shew that he was perfectly resigned to all these severe marks of the Divine displeasure, addressed himself to him in words to this effect: "I am now, said he, "but in the same state and condition I was "when I first came into the world, and have lost "no more than what I must have parted with, "whenever it should please the Almighty to "call me out of it. The Lord, though he hath "bereaved me at present of all I had, yet he "has taken from me nothing more than what, "in his infinite goodness, he first bestowed upon "me." *The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away: blessed be the name of the Lord.*

Thus, notwithstanding Job was oppressed with such a load of miseries as no mortal, it might be imagined, could, with any degree of patience, have ever borne, yet he suffered not one indecent word to proceed from his mouth that tended in the least either to accuse the Almighty, or call his over-ruling Providence into question.

The former prosperity of Job, and the great change which thus took place the learned Dr. Young has beautifully expressed in the following lines:

Thrice happy Job long liv'd in regal state,
Nor saw the sumptuous east a prince so great;
Whose worldly stores in such abundance flow'd,
Whose heart with such exalted virtue glow'd:
At length misfortunes take their turn to reign,
And ills on ills succeed; a dreadful train!

All the accounts of those who had travelled into this part of the world, these kind of winds whirl about in a circular form, like eddies in the sea, and therefore, without any miraculous operation, this might have a strong influence over every part of the globe at one single blast. Besides, in an impetuous tempest, such as this doubtless was, and such as mariners too frequently meet with in some particular passages, they are perfectly at a loss to know from what part of the compass the wind blows, since, by its violence, it proceeds, to all outward appearance, from every quarter of the heavens at one and the same time. As these arguments however, may not be sufficient to convince some unbelievers of the probability of such a circumstance, we shall refer them to a celebrated writer, who, it is very likely, may have a greater authority with them than Moses; and if we can produce the testimony of so great an author as Virgil to confirm what we have asserted, we may hope that they will acquiesce in a point which they have hitherto considered as ridiculous and absurd. For this purpose we direct them to the first *Æneid* of Virgil, where they will find the description of a storm raised by Æolus the god of the winds, which is thus beautifully translated by the celebrated Mr. Dryden:

Æolus, after having paid his compliments to the goddess to whom his speech is directed, proceeds to execute her commands as follows:

He said:—and hurl'd against the mountain-side,
His quiv'ring spear, and all the god apply'd.

A short time after Job was reduced to this deplorable situation, the holy angels going once again to attend God's throne, in order to give an account of their respective commissions, Satan likewise openly appeared amongst them, and presented himself as one equally ready and willing to be examined in regard to his past conduct. Not daring, however, to speak till spoken to, he waited till God demanded of him where he had been, and what he had done. To which he made a reply to this effect: "That he had lost no part of his time, but had taken a second circuit round the earth to find a favourable opportunity for the execution of his power." The Almighty then said to Satan, *Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without a cause.* As if he had said, "You are now convinced that the character I gave of my servant Job was strictly just, and that you brought in your charge against him without the least grounds, since he still resolutely persists in the unwearied exercise of his exalted virtues; and maintains his integrity with the same strictness and sincerity as he did in his state of affluence and prosperity, notwithstanding my assent to those severe calamities which he has so undeservedly suffered."

The answer returned to this by the malicious Satan was to the following effect: "Your servant Job continues seemingly constant, 'tis true, and unmoved at present, neither is it any great matter of wonder or surprize that he does so; since any one may be said to be rich enough that enjoys a perfect state of health; and who would not set down contented with the loss of his effects, and the lives of his children, if by those means he could preserve his own? Do but enlarge my commission, and let me touch him to the quick:

The raging winds rush thro' the hollow wound,
And dance in air, and skim along the ground.
Then settling on the sea, the surges sweep,
Raise liquid mountains, and disclose the deep.
North, South, East, West, with mix'd confusion roar,
And roll the foaming billows to the shore.
The cables crack, the sailor's fearful cries
Ascend; and sable night involves the skies;
And heaven itself is ravish'd from their eyes.
Loud peals of thunder from the poles ensue,
Then flashing fires the transient light renew:
The face of things a frightful image bears,
And present death in various forms appears.

Though this is certainly a sufficient evidence to confute those atheists who disbelieve the circumstance of the howling of Job's son being rent at the four corners at the same time, yet it may not be improper to add the description given of whirlwinds, or hurricanes in this part of the world by the famous Mr. Addison:

So, where our wide Numidian wastes extend,
Sudden, th' impetuous hurricanes descend,
Wheel thro' the air, in circling eddies play,
Tear up the sands, and sweep whole plains away.
The helpless traveller, with wild surprize,
Sees the dry desert all around him rise,
And smother'd in the dusty whirlwind dies.

“ quick: let me but once lay my hand upon
“ his body, and I will engage the hypocrite will
“ be soon unmasked; and you will find that he
“ will renounce your Providence, and ungrate-
“ fully treat you for all your former bene-
“ factions.”

The Almighty, well knowing that all Job's other virtues would be, by his additional afflictions, still rendered more exemplary and illustrious, replied, *Behold, he is in thine hand: but save his life.* Which was as much as to say, “ I
“ now give you the same power over his person,
“ as I did before over his family and effects:
“ Inflict what distemper you think fit on him,
“ but presume not to touch his life.”

No sooner had Satan obtained this new commission than, withdrawing from the Divine presence more transported with pleasure than before, he went to pursue his mischievous purpose, and smote Job from head to foot with sore boils, or a fiery ulcer, whose malignant distemper was such an aggravation of his sorrow, that it obliged him to sit down on a dunghill, and lay hold of the first thing that came to hand (which happened to be a potsherd) to scrape off the filth and corruption that issued from his blains.

Never was human nature more disguised than was poor Job's body in this loathsome condition. His skin was studded with filthy scabs and blotches, not arising from any peccant humour in his natural constitution, which medicines might correct, but inflicted by malicious policy, which raised them to the highest extremity of pain, that thereby he might, if possible, be induced to despair and blaspheme his God. Nor were his pains short or intermitting, like fits and pangs, but of long continuance. And what greatly increased his misery was, the nastiness of his distemper, which rendered him not only odious to himself, but loathsome to others; for not only his relations and friends abandoned him, but likewise his very menial servants, so that he was left destitute of all human assistance. Thus he, who but a short time before was the greatest man in his country, in whose presence the young men were afraid to appear, and before whom the aged stood up; to whom princes paid the greatest reverence, and nobles in humble silence admired, is now divested of all grandeur, sits mourning on a bed of dirt, and, instead of royal apparel, is covered with the most loathsome

sores and ulcers. He, who was but the other day the delight of mankind, is now become the foulest of objects; and a very dunghill upon a dunghill: All keep at a frightful distance, and with horror behold him as a most loathsome monster.

To add, if it were possible, to the misery of Job, in this distressed state, his wife, from whom, more than all the world, he might reasonably expect the most comfortable assistance, instead of pitying him in his deplorable condition, treated him with the utmost scorn and contempt, and profanely reproached him in words to this effect:
“ Thou doating devotee, how I detest thy hy-
“ pocrify! How vain are all thy affected pray-
“ ers! What, I beseech you, have they pro-
“ cured you, but one continued series of sor-
“ rows? Will you still seem perversely righteous?
“ Be wise for once, and know your own interest.
“ Bid defiance to him in whom you have put so
“ much trust, and, by one resolute act, put a
“ period to a life that is not worth prefer-
“ ring *.”

This blasphemous and perverse speech was, doubtless, no small aggravation to Job's agonizing pains; and notwithstanding her words cut him to the heart, yet he uttered no indecent expression, no murmur or complaint against God, on account of his extreme sufferings; but, on the contrary, not only severely reprimanded his evil counsellor, by telling her that she talked like a rash, thoughtless and foolish woman; but piously added thereto, that nothing ought ever to be taken ill at God's hands, and that the more good men received, the less reason had they to complain when they were visited by any sudden calamity. *Thou speakest,* said he, *as one of the foolish women speaketh: what! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?*

In the parts adjacent to Job's territories dwelt three of his very intimate acquaintance, namely, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite †, all persons of distinction, and universally admired for their profound wisdom. These three, hearing of their friend's sad calamity, left their respective seats, and meeting at a place appointed, went together the next day in order to condole with him, and, if possible, to alleviate his sorrows by their whole-
some admonitions.

* This unexpected attack from Job's wife, it may reasonably be supposed, took place at the instigation of the Tempter, who had, perhaps, assumed some agreeable form, and persuaded her, that the best way to put a period to her sorrows would be, to persuade her husband to blaspheme God: that there wanted nothing more to deprive him of life; for that the consequence of such an act of impiety would certainly produce his immediate dissolution. He might likewise add, that it was Job's secret sins that had brought so many, and such great calamities upon him: that the Almighty had showered down his vengeance upon him, in order to force him to discover his hypocrisy; and that, when he had so done, God would either deprive him entirely of life, or restore him to his former state of health. These insinuations might work strongly with Job's wife, who is represented to have been a discreet and virtuous woman. If this was the case (as there is great reason to think it was) consequently the greater affliction must it be to Job to find that she believed him guilty of hypocrisy and dissimulation; and to hear her persuading him to what his soul abhorred, to dis-

honour God and his own integrity. To meet with reproach from those from whom we hope for comfort must certainly be more piercing than even the most acute bodily pains. The Psalmist has most beautifully expressed the uneasiness and disquietude of his mind, when he once laboured under the ungrateful deportment of One, whom we may reasonably suppose was as near and dear to him, as this woman was to Job. *It is not,* says he, *an open enemy that has done me this dishonour, for then I could have borne it; neither was it mine adversary that did magnify himself against me; for then peradventure I would have bid myself from him: but it was even thou, my companion, my guide, and mine own familiar friend.*

† It is the opinion of the Jewish doctors, and the Septuagint agree with them, that these three persons were kings, or chief rulers, and had the government of those parts of the country where they lived. It is likewise evident, from scripture, that they were men of illustrious birth, and that they were particularly distinguished, in that age, for their great wisdom and knowledge.

As soon as they came near the place, and saw their afflicted friend sitting on a dunghill in the most consummate misery; they were shocked to that degree, that they suddenly started back, and for some time stood aghast as if they had beheld a spectre. After a little recovering themselves, and again looking at him, they burst into tears, rent their garments, and threw dust into the air, which, descending on their heads, expressed the confusion they were in, to find him so disfigured by his noisome boils that they could scarcely be convinced he was the man they looked for. However, when they had taken a more perfect and nearer view of him, they sat down on the earth at some distance from him; and seeing him in so disconsolate a condition, they never offered, for seven days and nights successively, to utter one single word; nor did they make the attempt, till time (which occasions an alteration in all things) had caused some abatement of their friend's sorrow, as well as their own.

This distressed scene of Job and his three friends, at their first interview, is thus beautifully and concisely described by the celebrated Dr. Young:

What now but deaths, and poverty and wrong,
The sword wide wasting, the reproachful tongue,
And spotted plagues that mark'd his limbs all o'er
So thick with pains, they wanted room for more?
A change so sad what mortal heart could bear?
Exhausted woe had left him nought to fear,
But gave him all to grief: low earth he prest,
Wept in the dust, and sorely smote his breast.
His friends around the deep affliction mourn'd
Felt all his pangs, and groan for groan return'd;
In anguish of their hearts their mantles rent,
And seven long days in solemn silence spent.

When the seven melancholy days and nights were expired, Job, being overwhelmed with sorrow, and finding that his friends had been altogether silent, without administering the least ray of comfort, could no longer contain himself, but broke out into the most passionate complaints against the day of his birth, with fervent wishes for his deliverance from a life dragged on in pain and misery. These complaints and wishes are contained in the third chapter, the whole of which has been thus paraphrased by a very celebrated writer:

Curs'd be the day when first I view'd the light,
And curs'd again be that unfriendly night
When first my form to mortal sight was shown,
When first my birth to glad'ning friends was known:
Curs'd be the time with more than Stygian gloom,
And death's dark shadows be its lonely doom.
Let not th' Almighty from his throne on high,
On those void minutes cast a gracious eye;
Let them receive an everlasting blot,
From others lie unnotic'd and forgot,
Because they gave my birth no just restraint,
Nor drew the veil o'er sorrow's sad complaint.
Why dy'd I not ere nature gave me light,
Or brought the struggling infant into light?
Why did the breasts prevent my parting breath,
Or knees oppose the giddy swoons of death?
Then had I been by no sad woes oppress'd,
But in deep slumber took eternal rest;
With kings and rulers long before expir'd,
Who, sick of life, had to the dust retir'd.
With princes, who in shining hoards excell'd,
Or births, which parents never yet beheld?

There to disturb mankind the wicked cease,
The weary rest, the troubled are at peace.
The prisoners enjoy unbroken sleep,
Still unoppress'd, and still unus'd to weep.
There fate alike to mortal race is just,
There high, there low, lie mould'ring in the dust.
Why lives to weep the sadly tortur'd soul,
To suck the dregs of life's unfriendly bowl?
Why for too partial death does man complain,
Why call so oft, and why so oft in vain?
Why 'mongst the sons of happiness is found,
The wretch whom God with woes has hedg'd
around?

For swelling cares at first approach of morn,
Like torrents rage, unable to be borne;
And those which fill'd me oft with tim'rous dread,
Like bursting thunders crackle o'er my head.
Scarce happy days, or joyous times I knew,
Or pleasure's landscapes open'd to my view;
When Safety setting, robb'd me of its right,
And woe's pale eve brought on the shades of night,

Eliphaz the Temanite (who was the most able orator of Job's three friends) having listened, with no small concern, at his impatient, and as he thought) blasphemous execrations, could no longer refrain from speaking, and therefore, (together with his two companions) going close to the spot where he sat, admonished him for his conduct in words to this effect:

"We came, friend Job, to alleviate your sorrows, if possible, by condoling with you in the softest terms; but you have, contrary to our expectations, shewed your impatience and inquietude to so shameful a degree, and cast such audacious reflections on the Almighty (of whom you have always spoken till now with the most profound and reverential awe) that instead of pouring balm into your wounds, my language, perhaps, may, like the probe, only aggravate your pains for the present. But who can refrain from vindicating the Divine Justice, and using his best endeavours to set an erring friend in the right way? We readily acknowledge, that your wise instructions have given great relief to the afflicted, and made the feeble strong; that such as have mourned and been overwhelmed with sorrows, have found your friendly advice, like an healing balsam, mitigate their pains; that your pious exhortations have confirmed many in their constancy and resignation to the Divine will; but now, since 'tis your turn to undergo the sufferer's part, it visibly appears, by your unjustifiable murmurs and complaints, that 'tis much more easy to give good counsel than to receive it; to recommend the afflicting rod, than to bear it; you have now almost convinced us, that your views were all mean and mercenary, and that you served God in hopes only of some recompence or reward. Give but yourself the least time for reflection, and you will find that the innocent and virtuous were never plunged in such an abyss of woes (like yours) as were beyond all hopes of cure: they never bear the marks of the Divine vengeance to so severe a degree. They are oftentimes chastised, indeed, and kindly corrected by the hand of Providence, but never totally destroyed. A truly upright person was never known to be undone beyond recovery, as you appear to be. He that delights to sow iniquity shall inevitably see a rueful harvest of destruction."

"Though

“ Though I would not boast of receiving any celestial intelligence, yet, to convince you still farther of your error, listen with patience to what I was secretly informed by an heavenly messenger.

“ One night, as I was lying on my bed, I saw a vision that struck me with a reverential horror: my hair stiffened, as it were, at the unusual apparition, and my joints trembled with a fear that was irresistible. And notwithstanding I saw plainly a corporeal substance stand before me, yet I cannot describe the form and shape distinctly it assumed, through the confusion and flutter which my spirits then were in. There was, for some time, a profound silence, but at length I heard a voice utter, with all the deliberation imaginable, words to this effect: Shall any finite creature (said he) dare to be more righteous than the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth? Shall any mortal man presume to vie with his Maker in regard to his purity and perfection? Since the Almighty charges even his angels with folly, and since the archangels themselves bow down and blush before him, shall a mere man contend with his Maker, and endeavour to justify his innocence and conduct before him? Shall a mere man, I say, act with such a consummate assurance, whose habitation is nothing more than a house of clay, and whose foundation is in the dust, and liable to be destroyed by the meanest insect? Thousands perish every day, and their fall excites no manner of wonder or regard. In vain they fly for succour to their immense riches and their extensive power; for, as they lived, so they die in their folly.

“ Correct, therefore, friend Job, thy rash discourse, and never more presume to reflect on, or arraign the justice of thy Maker. Though some foolish persons, it is probable, may approve of your conduct, and start bold objections against heaven, on seeing you in this most melancholy and deplorable condition; though my words, perhaps, may have no influence or effect over you, yet consult with the most pious, and such as are more distinguished for their wisdom than I dare pretend to: enquire, I say, of whom you please, nay, even of an angel, if any one will condescend to converse with you, and you will find the purport of his answer to be this: that God, in his own due time and way, makes the wicked, and those who obstinately persist in an open violation of his commandments, feel with horror and amazement the weight of his Divine vengeance. This position is so true and certain, that I have foretold the destruction of the ungodly man, even whilst he seemed most secure of every temporal blessing that his heart could wish for: nay, I have predicted the downfall of his very children. Justice, I have observed, never fails, in process of time, to lay fast hold of them, and very seldom, if ever, suffers one to escape. The hungry leaped over their most thorny fences, and enjoyed the fruits of their labours. The spoilers came, and without mercy made incursions upon them, ransacked their habitations, and laid waste all their fruitful lands.

“ Though afflictions, it is true, spring not from the dust, neither are they to be ascribed to any earthly causes, which are the instruments

only of the Almighty's vengeance; yet mankind, when they have offended their Maker, as naturally meet with sorrow and distress, as the rivers fall into the ocean, or as the sparks mount upwards to the skies. This is the sad portion which injured heaven has assigned to the whole race of Adam, ever since his first transgression; and therefore Job, was your case my own, I would address myself with all humility to the throne of grace, adore God's infinite perfections, and, in a word, fall prostrate before him, and sue for mercy: for his ways are dark and intricate, his secrets are past man's finding out; his Providence, when least understood, is most merciful, and ever just, and keeps our thoughts in endless admiration. He hangs his clouds, and forms his rain-drops, in a mould unknown to us: he pours his waters in profusion on the hills; and in the vales, his softer, more prolific showers, by which the poor grow rich, and by which he wipes off the tears from the mourner's cheek: whilst, on the other hand, he entangles the man of craft, defeats the evil-counsellor, and blasts his most deep concerted designs. He turns the statesman's art against himself, and countermines the politician's project: he often, by interposing mists, obscures their sight, makes them lose their way, and imagine it to be night when it is only noon-day. He guards the poor from the oppressor's wrongs, and secures the weak from those who would otherwise overpower them. No one, therefore, however injured, should despair, as there may be hopes justly entertained that God will save him, and stop the mouth of proud injustice.

“ Since then, friend Job, the man is happy that feels the smart of God's correcting hand, dont you despise it; imagine you are favoured when you are chastened; let no desponding thoughts perplex your mind, for he that made the wound will make it whole: he will deliver you, in time, from all the numerous woes that now surround you, and change your scene of misery to joy: if you will but acquiesce, and persevere with patience, he will protect you with a paternal care, both in the day of famine and of battle. The poison of the most malignant tongue shall never blast your reputation, and you shall be secure, though all the adjacent countries shall be laid waste around you. You shall be fearless and undaunted when the wild beasts, half famished, quit their dens in quest of prey: the soil, however barren before, shall bring forth its fruits in plenty for your use, and wherever you are, nothing shall destroy them: wherever you pitch your tent, there shall you rest in safety; and when you settle your accounts, your substance will be found to answer all your expectations. Your offspring shall prove as numberless as the sands of the sea-shore, or blades of grass in the most verdant meadow, notwithstanding you are childless at present, and as destitute of all things as the trees are of leaves in the depth of winter. And when death, who is ever watchful, shall look for his harvest, and see you ripe with age, he shall cut down your bending stalk as gently as possible, and lay you low in the grave; just as the husbandman deposits his corn into the garner, when it is fit for gathering.

“ These,

"These, friend Job, are indisputable truths. I have weighed them well, and know them to be such. Remember, therefore, what I have told you, and be assured that, from such reflections, there is not the least doubt but you will find immediate consolation."

This warm discourse from Eliphaz was far from convincing Job that his conduct was so impeachable as his friend had represented. Instead of lamenting the execrations he had made on his birth-day, he endeavoured to justify, and, as through the anguish of his soul, he then wished most devoutly for the day of his dissolution, and thereby a final period to his sorrows, so he now renewed that wish with equal fervency. The substance of the answer he made to Eliphaz, in vindication of his conduct, was to the following effect:

"Oh, (said he) that my grief was once thrown into a balance, and all my afflictions were weighed against it! Oh, that some less partial judge than yourself would determine my unhappy case, and pronounce whether my complaints bear any proportion to my agonizing pains! for then he would ingenuously acknowledge that the sands of the sea were but a trivial weight in comparison to the massy burthen under which I labour. Unutterable groans torment my soul; nor is it in the power of words to paint my woes. It is easy, indeed, for you, who are free from care and pain, who live in peace and plenty, not to murmur or repine. Is the wild ass displeased when he grazeth in the verdant meadow? Or does the ox low with discontent while he stands hovering over his fodder? But were you to feel the weight of my distress, your groans would be proportionate to mine; your sorrows would swell to as high a tide. Is there any one can take the least pleasure in unfavoury meats? What taste is there in the white of an egg? Who would not ask for a few grains of salt to render it a little less insipid? How much more justly then may I petition for something to make my bitter potion palatable? I, who am at present reduced to that excess of grief, that I have nothing to support me under such uncharitable imputations as yours are; imputations which my soul abhors. To such an amazing height are my troubles risen; such is the weight of my unutterable woe; my soul is driven to such an extremity, that I must still implore the Divine goodness to grant me the request I so earnestly desire, to shew some bowels of compassion, and, in short, by one decisive stroke, to let me enjoy death, which I now thirst after more than ever. I would extend my arms to bid him welcome,

and hug the ghastly monarch to my bosom. His presence would support me under the most agonizing pains: the thoughts that my life was near at an end would appease my anguish: I would then shew an undaunted courage, and depart with joy, as being conscious that I have not been guilty of any known or wilful sin, whereby to draw down the vengeance of heaven on my devoted head. What is my strength, alas, and how absurd would it be for me to live in hopes of better days? What is my end? Where is my period set when I shall sigh no more? Oh, that the blow was struck! since to prolong my life is but an aggravation to my misery.

"I was in hopes (continued Job) your friendly admonition would have relieved me, and once imagined that your discourses would have alleviated my sorrows; but, by your mistake of my distemper, instead of asswaging my grief, you have only inflamed it. Am I, think you, as insensible as the most impenetrable marble? Are all my muscles composed of brass, that I should not invoke death to ease me of my load of sorrow? Do not imagine, Eliphaz, that my reason is disturbed, that I am driven to despair, and totally regardless of what I say and do: yet, were that my most deplorable case, a friend should shew some pity and compassion for one in such distress as I am: and doubtless you would have been, in some measure concerned for me, had you the fear of God before your eyes, or did you but once reflect, that he could cast you down, like me, with equal ease. My friends, I find, prove as deceitful as the stream of such brooks as are formed by the hasty rains, and blackened with the ice and snow which fall from the hills with a prodigious noise, and roll along the vales. They promise water, 'tis true; but as soon as summer comes they are dry; they are so perfectly vanished, that you can scarce discern the least footstep of the course in which they ran. The people of Tema and Sheba expected to have quenched their thirst at pleasure where once they observed such a confluence of water; but, alas, they were most shamefully disappointed, and blushed to think, that they should be so weak as to build their hopes of succour on such precarious streams*. Just such are you, who, seeing my calamity, desert me. Why do you stare so, and thus gaze on me at a distance? Is it my disease that occasions this estrangement? Are you afraid that I shall infect you, that you seem in such a consternation? Are you apprehensive that I shall beg your charitable assistance under my present misfortunes? Did I ever implore you to relieve my wants?"

* This is certainly a most beautiful similitude, or representation, of the treacherous and deceitful deportment Job conceived of his three friends.—Mr. Addison says, Man is subject to innumerable pains and sorrows by the very condition of his system; and yet, as if nature had not sown evils enough in life, we are continually adding grief to grief, and aggravating the common calamity by our cruel treatment of each other. Every man's natural weight of affliction is still made more heavy by the envy, malice, treachery, or injustice of his neighbour. At the same time that the storm beats upon the whole species, we are falling foul of each other.—In the apocryphal treatise, entitled, *The Wisdom of the Son of Sirach*, we find the behaviour of a trea-

cherous and self-interested friend thus beautifully described: "If thou wouldst get (says he) a friend, prove him first, and be not hasty to credit him: for some man is a friend for his own occasion, and will not abide in the day of thy trouble; and there is a friend, who, being turned to enmity and strife, will discover thy reproach." On this subject there is a very striking passage in Ovid, the translation of which runs thus:

Those, who the various gifts of fortune gain,
A thousand fawning, flattering friends obtain:
But if the goddess frown, those friends no more
Regard the idol they ador'd before.

wants? Did I ever desire to be delivered out of the hands of the oppressor at your expence? But notwithstanding this appeal, I would not have you imagine that I look down with an eye of contempt on any of your admonitions. No; I am ready and willing to listen to any charge that you may justly lay against me, and shall, with all imaginable sincerity and gratitude, be thankful for any better information. Truth, indeed, is irresistible, but all your reprehensions have no manner of influence or effect. All your pride and ambition is to play the orator; but in vain do you study the most artful terms to drive me into despair. Nay, you press hard upon me, who am too much dejected already, and altogether defenceless; in short, you devise counsel against your friend in the most barbarous and inhuman manner. Have I uttered any thing hitherto that has deserved this severe treatment at your hands? I cannot think myself so blind, so partial to myself; I cannot imagine that my judgment is so debased, or that my taste is so bad and undistinguished, as not to perceive these your words are all misapplied, and will never be able to stand the test of impartial truth."

Here Job made a short pause, and then resumed his discourse in words to this effect: "Man's life, said he, has a determined period by the irrevocable and fixed decree of the Almighty: his days will expire at the appointed time like those of an hireling. Does not the weary peasant wish for the approach of evening, at which time he knows that his toil and fatigue will be over, and that at last he shall receive the fruits of his labour? Why then shall I be debarred from praying for rest and death, since life to me is a perfect burthen? I pass each tedious day in lingering woes, and, when night comes, that prompts all nature to rest, I find no mitigation of my sorrow. Even then, whilst others sleep, dark gloomy thoughts perplex my mind, and my griefs, if possible, become more

outrageous than by day, A thousand times I turn from side to side, but all in vain; the tortures I endure are still unutterable†. With longing eyes I look for break of day; but, when it comes, 'tis joyless all. My flesh is cloathed with loathsome worms, and every limb I have is crusted o'er with putrefaction. Hopeless my days in quick succession move, just as the shuttle traverses the loom. In tender compassion, then, O Lord, to my incessant griefs, remember that life outflies the wind, which, when 'tis passed, can never be recalled. One frown of thine will at once crush me to atoms. I die at once, as one that's struck with lightning. As clouds, when once they are dissolved, can never more repair their lost connection; so he that once descends into the grave will never more resume his former vigour: he shall never more enjoy his former habitation, or visit his neighbours from the silent grave.

"Since life, therefore, must one time or other cease, since death must come at last, I'll not refrain from praying for compassion, for some repose and ease, or a release from life. As grief is bold, my cries shall give my sorrows vent: expostulations and complaints shall give some ease to my afflicted soul. Am I, O Lord, a wild impetuous flood, that thou art forced to watch me, and keep me thus in bounds? Am I a whale, a monster of the sea, that thou shouldst bind me thus in fetters? If wished-for death may not at once relieve me, yet I might hope, at least, from sleep to find some intermission: but if my eyes be ever closed in slumbers, even then such horrid visions stand before me, that I had rather die than bear the shock. As life, therefore, is an insufferable load, is loathsome, and the object of my detestation, let me alone to die. Why should I live thus long in lingering torments? Oh, what is man, that God should condescend to try his strength? Is he worthy of thy notice, or thy blow, that thou shouldst

† It is evident, from the description Job gives of his great uneasiness during the nights, that if he had any sleep, instead of its giving him any refreshment, it was of the most terrifying nature. Such sleep is occasioned by thick vapours, or gross fumes ascending from the stomach to the brain, which close, or lock up, the senses; and the stronger and thicker such fumes or vapours are, the more liable the person is to be terrified and disturbed. There are several reasons to be given why people in general are frequently perplexed in their sleep with disagreeable dreams. First, dreams are sometimes caused either by intemperate eating or drinking, or from the indisposition of the body through sickness or agonizing pains; and from hence more particularly did Job's shocking dreams arise. Secondly there is a moral cause of dreams, the cares and disquietudes which a man meets with in the day frequently affecting his imagination in the night. Thirdly, there are diabolical dreams, and of such Job pathetically complains: *Thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions.* But it was the malicious Satan who made this addition to poor Job's punishment; and, by taking advantage of his deplorable state and condition, stirred the gross humours of his body up into his brains, out of which his fancy formed the most hideous apparitions.

The nature and cause of dreams is beautifully described by the celebrated Mr. Dryden, from whom it may not be improper to insert the two following passages:

All dreams, as in old Galen I have read,
Are from repletion and complexion bred:
From rising fumes of indigested food,
And noxious humours that infect the blood.

The yellow gall that in the stomach floats,
Engenders various visionary thoughts.
When choler overflows, then dreams are bred
Of flames, and all the family of red;
Red dragons, and red beasts in sleep we view;
For humours are distinguish'd by their hue.
From hence we dream of wars and warlike things,
And wasps and hornets with their double wings.
Choler adust congeals our blood with fear,
Then black bulls toss us, and black devils tear.
In sanguine, airy dreams, aloft we bound;
With rheums oppres'd, we sink in rivers drown'd.
More I cou'd say, but thus conclude my theme;
The dominating humour makes the dream.

In another place he says,

Dreams are but interludes, which fancy makes,
When monarch reason sleeps, the mimic wakes:
Compounds a medley of disjointed things,
A court of coblers, and a mob of kings:
Light fumes are merry, grosser fumes are sad;
Both are the reasonable soul run mad.
And many monstrous forms in sleep we see,
That neither were, nor are, nor e'er can be.
Sometimes forgotten things long cast behind,
Rush forward in the brain, and come to mind.
Sometimes we but rehearse a former play,
The night restores our actions done by day,
As hounds in sleep will open for their prey.

shouldst set thyself against him? Wilt thou engage thy power against a worm? Is poor, weak man a proper object of thy anger? Give me some little respite: give me, O Lord, some easy moments. Oh, spare a wretch that has not long to live. I acknowledge my guilt; I am overwhelmed with shame, and conscious, O thou observer of men, that I can make thee no manner of compensation. Can I implore thy aid in vain? I know that all thy chastisements are forced; that mercy is thy darling attribute. Why, then, hast thou set me as a mark against thee? If I am the peculiar object of thy displeasure, why dost thou not remove me out of thy sight? Fain would I lay my burthen down and die. O Lord, forgive the mighty debt of all my guilt, and, though my sins are great, remember mercy."

The apologies and observations of Job in vindication of his conduct made very little, if any impression on his friends; for no sooner had he finished his complaints than another of his visitors, namely, Bildad the Shuhite continued the dispute, and severely reprehended him in words to this effect: "How long wilt thou break the bounds of patience; and how durst thou expostulate thus perversely with thy maker? Canst thou impiously imagine that the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth will act with partiality, and pass too severe a sentence upon thee? Or that He, who wants nothing from thee, will deviate from the most exact rules of justice? Is it not reasonable to suppose that thy rebellious children had highly provoked the Divine Majesty, from the sudden and unforeseen vengeance which he took upon them? Is it not equally reasonable to think, that if (instead of murmuring and repining after this shameful and unwarrantable manner) thou wouldest, with a contrite heart, implore his grace and favour, acknowledge his perfect justice, and add but purity of heart to thy prayers, he would exert his power for thy support, and restore thy family to its pristine splendor? I am fully persuaded that, poor as thou art at present, thy substance would soon increase, and thou wouldest be as immensely rich as ever thou wast before these heavy calamities fell down with such weight upon thee. I do not, however, desire that thou shouldest entirely depend upon my word: No; take thy instructions from those who are gone before us; and make the strictest enquiries into the most authentic and most antient histories, which will, doubtless, not only set thee right in this important debate, but will shew from repeated observations, for many ages, the truth of all these maxims which I have advanced. As a rush that rears its head in a watery meadow withers away for want of proper soil and moisture, and consequently requires not the hand of the mower to cut it down, whilst the lesser plants, that for a time envied its hasty growth stand surprized at so sudden and unexpected an alteration; just so the beauty of an ungodly man is at once blasted, who has laid no solid foundation for its long continuance; who has neglected his God (without whose blessing no one can possibly prove long successful) who can with ease discern the most subtle hypocrite, and will most assuredly defeat his hopes, and prevent him from the attainment of that happiness he so eagerly pursues. He

may, if he pleases, flatter himself, that all his undertakings will be crowned with success, but then his disappointment will only prove so much the greater; for the thing whereon he places his dependence is weaker than the spider's web. He may vainly imagine that his family is so illustrious and powerful that it will support him; but he will find his house will sink, and frustrate all his expectations. He may possibly endeavour to strengthen it by repeated alliances, but he shall find even those but fruitless props: nay, farther, he may seem, to all outward appearance, not only in the eyes of the world, but in his own partial thoughts of himself, to be like a tree that spreads its fruitful branches over a fine garden; whose interweaving roots have twisted round the stones in solid ground, and whose lofty head raises itself above the most stately buildings: yet, when the Almighty is pleased to blast him, and pluck him up by the roots, his very name shall be forgotten, and not a soul shall recollect that such a person had resided in the place. No better than this is the pleasure that the wicked take in their most prosperous state; whilst others again shall shoot up in their stead, and flourish out of dust. It is a never-failing maxim that God will never reject the perfect man; nor can the wicked ever hope, with any good grounds, for his aid and assistance. From hence, friend Job, we may draw this certain conclusion; that thou art not strictly virtuous, since the Almighty is pleased to abandon thee to thy despair. If thou wilt not return to him, inevitable destruction is thy doom: but, on the other hand, if thou art convinced of thy evil ways, and art determined to amend, he will restore thee to thy former state of health and power, increase the number of thy friends, and multiply thy possessions to such a degree, that thy delight shall glow upon thy cheeks, and thou shalt burst out into joyful acclamations. Those who reviled thee, and cursed thy habitation, shall blush for shame; they shall be confounded to see thee restored to thy former state of peace and prosperity. In the mean time inevitable destruction shall efface the wicked man and all his impious progeny."

In the speech Job made in answer to Bildad, he acknowledged the former part of his discourse was well conducted; and, like a truly pious and devout man, adored the justice, unerring wisdom, and absolute power of the Almighty. He then, with all humility, acknowledged himself altogether incapable of disputing with his Maker, or justifying himself in his presence, and for that reason he relied wholly on his infinite mercy and goodness. However, he boldly asserted (in opposition to what his two friends had maintained) that God, for wise and just ends best known to himself, afflicted those who were strictly virtuous, and high in his favour, as well as those who were abandoned wretches and an abomination to his sight; and that, on the other hand, he permitted some, who indulged themselves in all manner of vices to meet with success in all their worldly undertakings, and flourish to the last moment of their lives. He then spoke to this effect: "As for my part, said he, his afflicting rod has fallen with that weight upon me, that I am overawed, and

and durst not speak. If he will but withhold his terrors, and make allowances for human frailty, then will I speak my sentiments with freedom, and take my trial with undaunted courage: but that, alas, is not my happy case. He still exercises on me the rigour of his justice, for which reason I will yet complain as I have done before; since *that* alone is left to mitigate my sorrows." After mentioning the inexpressible torments under which he laboured, Job concluded his discourse to Bildad with imploring God to look down upon him with an eye of pity and compassion, and, if it were his Divine will, to assuage the anguish of his soul; which solicitations he expressed in words to this effect: "Give me, said he, most gracious God, some little respite, and interrupt my sorrows for one moment, before I am conducted to my silent tomb, to the dark shades of death, from whence I never shall return: a region, where it is as dark as can possibly be conceived, where day-light never enters, as here it does by turns; where no order in the least is ever kept; and where the walls, in short, are so fenced with solid darkness, that it is, as it were, all but one continued night."

As soon as Job had finished his reply to Bildad, his third friend and visitor, Zophar the Naamathite, interposed in the debate, and, with no small degree of warmth and resentment, addressed him in words to this effect: "Dost thou imagine, said he, because thy discourses are prolix, and thou makest use of a flow of words, that thou canst ever prevail upon us to declare thee innocent? Shall thy false allegations drown our reason, and oblige us to hold our peace? Shall we suffer thee, because thou labourest under a load of afflictions, to talk against God with insolence and presumption? Shalt thou treat us, who came on purpose to condole with and instruct thee, with such insufferable pride? Shalt thou exalt thy own uprightness and integrity, and audaciously assert, that God himself can find out no just cause for his censure or condemnation of thy conduct? I humbly implore, however, the Divine Majesty that he would condescend to convince thee of thy errors; that he would be pleased to interpose in this important debate, and confute thee with his own mouth; that he would expose to view the secret stores and depths of his unerring wisdom (which infinitely surpasses thy weak penetration) in those severe dispensations of his Divine Providence; and demonstrate to thee, beyond all contradiction, that, notwithstanding he should still add to thy afflictions, he would be infinitely just and gracious. Is it in thy power, thinkest thou, after all thy most profound researches, to account for the judgments of the Almighty? Canst thou, vain creature, entertain any adequate idea of the concealed views of his over-ruling Providence? If God should think fit to cut a whole nation from off the earth, or should shut up ten thousand miserable captives into dungeons; if he should, on the other hand, condescend to release them from their chains, or to ease a nation that is harassed and fatigued, who shall presume to start objections against his conduct, or to charge him with any act of injustice? For he knows the rashness and folly of mankind, and can expose their iniquitous practices, however secret and concealed: nay,

he can discover the very thoughts of their guilty hearts, and reveal their errors. Notwithstanding thou mayest boast, indeed, of thy righteousness, and mayest vainly declare thyself innocent, and free from sin, yet he can discern the hypocrisy that lurks within thee; and if so, canst thou imagine, that he will stand unconcerned, and not punish or correct his creatures for the errors of their ways? Shall vain, despicable men, presume to censure or acquit the Almighty? If, then, thou wouldst act the part of a wise and prudent man, leave off these rash contentions with thy Maker, and betake thyself to prayer and supplications. If thou art guilty of any known sin, though ever so secret and concealed from the eyes of thy neighbours, chase it from thy heart: thou shalt then dissipate all thy fears, and blot out of thy remembrance all thy past misfortunes; or at least thou shalt reflect on them as on waters only that are run away, and will no more return. The remainder of thy days shall prove more glorious than the sun in his meridian splendor, and more serene and fairer than the morning. Notwithstanding any impending danger may threaten thee, thou shalt be fearless and secure, because there is hope that the Almighty will shelter and protect thee. Thy habitation shall be undisturbed, and when thou liest down to rest, no sudden alarms shall affright thee. Thy neighbours shall flock round about thee, court thy friendship, and make their applications to be sheltered under thy protection. It shall not, however, be thus with the wicked; they shall be overwhelmed with insufferable woes; they shall cry aloud for help, but no one shall relieve them; as a blast of air, all their hope shall vanish: and, as it is the Almighty that denounces war against them, who shall deliver them out of his hands?"

Zophar having concluded his harangue, Job resumed the argument, in which he endeavoured to acquit himself of the accusation laid against him by Zophar. He charged all three of his visitors with a partial regard for their own wisdom, which was so depraved that it had not so much as taught them how to shew common pity and compassion for their neighbours in distress. He then intimated that he had no occasion to apply to them for instruction; but that they ought rather to open their eyes, and be convinced of the fallacy so apparent in the last proposition of Zophar's, with respect to the inexpressible calamities of the ungodly; since it was obvious to sense that the wicked too frequently led a life of uninterrupted peace and tranquillity. From hence he proceeded to shew the unerring wisdom and justice of God in the government of all temporal affairs, and particularly in permitting some to be prosperous and happy, whilst others were overwhelmed with cares and troubles; in exalting one man, and humbling another, according as it seemed most meet to his own good will and pleasure. He then asserted that his own understanding was no ways inferior to those of his friends, who took, as he imagined, too great a freedom in their reprehensions; and assured them that God was far from being pleased with those who defended his Providence by laying down false and erroneous doctrines. After this he begged of God to grant some alleviation

alleviation of his sorrows, since the life of man was but very short, and that too attended with a variety of troubles; and more especially, since, when death came, which must be quickly, there was no return from the grave; no yearly revival as there is in plants. He then mentioned himself as a remarkable instance of those calamities to which mankind are subject, and implored the Divine Majesty to look down with an eye of pity and compassion on the deplorable condition to which, from a state of affluence and ease, he was unhappily reduced.

When Job had finished his reply to Zophar's harangue, Eliphaz, the Temanite, resumed the controversy with much more warmth than he had spoken before, being somewhat exasperated that Job should think so highly of his own judgment as to treat the exhortations of his friends with such visible marks of contempt. He charged Job with reflecting on the Almighty as partial and unjust; and asserted, that notwithstanding the ungodly might prove prosperous and successful for a time, yet God punishes them severely even in this life; for their evil consciences, like apparitions, haunted them wherever they went.

Job made a reply to Eliphaz with great warmth and resentment. He charged his friends with being perfectly inhuman and hard-hearted in tiring him with their repeated accusations of the same crime, especially as they were eye-witnesses of his deplorable circumstances: that he did not deserve the ill treatment he had met with, and that all their reproaches were not only barbarous, but unjust. He then made new and warm protestations of his innocent and inoffensive deportment towards his fellow-creatures, and his sincere affection, as well as reverential regard, for his Maker: and as God knew the truth of what he asserted, he appealed from their partial sentence to his awful tribunal for acquittance. He desired, as he had before done, to appear, as soon as possible, before the Almighty's tribunal, since his life, under such a complication of miseries, could not be of any long duration. He said, the reason of his continuing this request was, because his friends were very improper judges of his case, and had passed such a severe and partial sentence on his conduct, as no one that had the least share of humanity, or regard for justice, could possibly approve. By way of conclusion, he called God to witness the truth of his assertion, that he was perfectly innocent, and that the grave, into which he was ready to drop, considering his unhappy circumstances, was the only thing for which he could sincerely wish.

Job and his three friends continued the debate, with great warmth, for a considerable time; till at length the latter, finding him firmly resolved to defend his cause, and maintain his innocence and integrity against all opposition, despairing of success, dropped the argument, and sat silent. In the interim, a young man, named Elihu, a descendant of Nahor, the brother of Abraham, who had listened with great attention to the arguments which had taken place between Job and his friends, was highly displeased with what had been advanced by both parties. He was incensed against Job for spending more time in vindication of his own innocence, than in the

justification of the Almighty; and with his three friends, for condemning their antagonist as an abandoned wretch, and a most egregious hypocrite, without being able to maintain their charge. He had, however, such a command over his passions, that he did not offer to speak till he found Job had ended his defence, and his accusers were determined to drop the debate, because they were all his superiors in regard to years. But when he perceived that neither of the three had any reply to make, he could not contain himself any longer, and therefore addressed himself to them in words to this effect:

“ My own youth, and your long experience, have hitherto awed me so far, that I have not had courage or resolution enough to interpose my sentiments in this important affair; for I reflected within myself, that it was more modest and decent for one of my tender years to listen with attention, than to speak too boldly before my elders; to be instructed by such sages as you appear to be, than presume to dictate. I perceive, however, I was very much mistaken: man is but a very despicable creature, though grey with years, unless his mind be irradiated with celestial light. True knowledge and understanding proceed from the inspiration of the Almighty. Such as are in power and authority, and such as take upon themselves to be the teachers of others, are not always, we find, men of the profoundest learning; neither do old men employ their years, at all times, so wisely, and so well, as to be able to distinguish in matters of importance as they ought. I therefore beg the favour of you, for once, to lend an ear to what I have to offer, and I will speak my sentiments freely on the debate in hand. Though I am but a youth 'tis true, yet do not look upon me as too bold and forward, since I have listened attentively for a long time to your repeated discourses on both sides the question. I have, moreover weighed every argument that has been produced, and suffered you to go on without the least interruption, till you have made your researches as far as you could into the affair. And, upon mature deliberation, I think myself obliged to declare, that neither of you have, in the least, confuted Job, or advanced any thing to the purpose, in regard to his vindication of himself. Your charge against him, that he is obstinate and perverse, is insufficient; and your saying that you will sit still, and leave him entirely to the disposal of the Almighty, in expectation that his terrors will convince him, though your arguments cannot do it, is equally vain, and as little to the purpose. I must, therefore, take the liberty to tell you, that I think the arguments you have all produced are very weak and inconclusive; and as Job has not, as yet, directed any part of his discourse to me, so neither will I perplex and confound him with any of your injudicious replies, in order to correct his errors. I may very justly complain to all that at present stand round me, that I have waited a long time, to no purpose, in hopes of receiving instruction. Your stock, I find, is exhausted; you stand silent, as if you were all speechless: for which reason I have told you, that I will venture to pronounce my judgment in this weighty affair,

affair, and revive the debate. Indeed, it is high time for me so to do, since the constraint which I have hitherto put upon my lips has given me the most insufferable pain. The thoughts which lie pent up in my bosom ferment within me like new-pressed wine in the vat, and I shall burst, unless they find some vent. I am compelled to speak, therefore, if it be only to ease my mind; for vessels that are full and working will break, unless they be opened. Whilst, then, I endeavour to shew you your errors, I shall have regard only to the cause, and not the person; and as flattery is not my habit, I shall not try to sooth you by any fulsome applause. I cannot, for my part, fawn upon you, or seem to stand in admiration of your wisdom, in hopes of gaining your approbation. Besides, were I to make use of such vile, such ungenerous artifices, I should be apprehensive, that he who created me would immediately strike me dumb, for acting with deceit, and playing the hypocrite in my heart.

“ And now, O Job (continued Elihu) I flatter myself that what I have already premised is sufficient to engage your attention. Hear me with patience; for I am prepared to speak, if you are but equally inclined to hear. And you may depend upon my veracity in this particular, that I will not utter any words with my tongue, but what are the very dictates of my heart. My instructions shall be so plain and clear, that they shall not need any comment.

“ Consider well, in the first place, that the structure of us both proceeded from the same model: both of us were formed of the same clay, and inspired with life by the same all-wise Creator. If, therefore, you are determined to defend your cause, you have now no one to contend with but your equal. You have several times seemed earnestly to desire that some impartial person would appear to plead, and argue the case freely with you. Now your wish is at last accomplished. I am the person that stands in his stead. I am your fellow-creature, and therefore you need be under no apprehensions of the contest being unequal. I am not cloathed in majesty, as the Almighty is, to terrify and affright you, as you have more than once already complained: I am endowed with no superior power whereby to injure or oppress you. I shall not charge you, as your three friends have done over and over, with imaginary crimes, unknown to any one except God and yourself, but such unwarrantable speeches as with mine own ears I have heard you utter. You have said, more than once, I am pure and altogether faultless, and innocent, void of offence towards God and towards man. God, who, I lived in hopes, would mitigate my sorrows, is become my adversary. He seeks every occasion to afflict and torment me, and every the least offence unjustly provokes him. He detains me in prison as a most heinous malefactor, and sets a strong guard over me, lest I should loose my bonds, and make my escape. These are your absurd and wild complaints, and from hence, as you are restless and impatient, you seek for relief.

“ Now, though it is impossible for me to detect your secret faults, and notwithstanding I am no ways inclined to follow the example of

your three friends; and lay uncertain and unknown crimes to your charge, yet herein your rashness is very apparent; herein, doubtless, you are too arrogant and presumptuous. How durst you, who are but a man, a meer worm, a worthless creature, compare yourself with him who gave you your existence? Audacious man! how durst you enter into such an unequal conference? Would you confute your Maker? Will he lay his secret counsels open before you? Will he entrust you with the secret springs of Divine government? You should consider, that all his works, as they are his, are just and good, and where your reason is too shallow to comprehend his ways, there you should acquiesce and learn submission. Not that our knowledge of God's works raises his envy in the least; for he not only endows us with wisdom various ways, but gives us, indeed, a larger portion of it than we are willing sometimes to receive. Sometimes he conveys instruction to our minds by dreams, or visions of the night: when we fall into a deep sleep, or gentle slumber, and are free from all the cares and business of the day, then he whispers to the ear with a still voice, then he reveals his Divine will, and imprints it on the mind. The Almighty, however, does not shew his reasons for his conduct; this heavenly intercourse is not designed to expose the secrets of his Providence. Sometimes again the Almighty conveys instruction to a man's mind by a much severer way. If it be his will and pleasure, sickness and pain shall break the strongest constitution, and lay the most blooming youth extended on his bed; in which languishing state and condition the rich meats he before took great delight in become nauseous and offensive. All on a sudden, he who moved with such an air, and appeared with such roseate cheeks, looks now all pale and ghastly: his bones, that were not to be seen before, now start through his very skin. His heart beats with pain, and there is scarce a single step between him and the grave. If, then, some person of more than common knowledge, some Divine messenger be sent (which is another way whereby God conveys instruction to the mind) to persuade this sick man to amend his ways: If, I say, the afflicted person's mind, by the pious admonitions of such a messenger, be formed to virtue, then that messenger, being touched with pity and compassion for his misfortunes, shall pray to the Almighty that he would be pleased to extend his mercy towards him, saying, O Lord, spare his life, and though thou chastisest him, as he is truly penitent, do not totally destroy him. Let it be sufficient that thou didst afflict him, and that thy rod has had its due influence over him. The Almighty will then restore him to his former state of health and ease, and he shall become a new man both in body and mind: his bones shall be again cloathed with flesh, and he shall look as healthful as when in the bloom of his life. He shall put up his humble supplications to the throne of grace, and the Almighty, being well pleased, will grant his request: he shall approach the temple of the Lord with gladness, and employ his grateful lips in hymns of praise. The Divine anger being thus appeased, the poor man will be acquitted, and God will admit him into his favour. Then

will he confess to his neighbours (as a true penitent ought) all his former errors, and express himself in terms to this, or the like effect: "I have sinned, indeed, against the Almighty, and he has justly punished me for my offences: though I deserved, it is true, to feel the weight of his rod, yet, in mercy, he has spared my life, and kindly saved me from the grave into which I was sinking: nay, moreover, he has given me good grounds to hope, that I shall once more be restored to my former state of peace and plenty." Behold, in all these proceedings, how conspicuous is the great goodness of God, who, by such various means, condescends to instruct us, and bring us to repentance; to restrain us from our vicious courses, which had brought us to the brink of the grave; and to raise us once more to a perfect state of peace and tranquillity.

"Weigh well, O Job, what I have hitherto said; for it may prove a concern to you of the last importance; and if I find you are disposed to listen with attention to what I have to add on the topic before us, I will gladly give you some farther instructions. Or, in case you have any material objection to start against what I have advanced, I shall very readily give you a hearing. Speak freely; I will not, by any means, interrupt you; for I should rejoice, if you can duly acquit yourself, and demonstrate that you are that innocent and faultless person you have so often asserted yourself to be. But, on the other hand, if you have no exception to what I have said, and you still imagine that there is any force or weight in my arguments, still lend me an attentive ear, and I will endeavour to improve your knowledge."

Here Elihu made a long pause, in order to give Job the opportunity of raising any objections he might think proper to what he had advanced. Job, however, kept a profound silence, being conscious that Elihu had not said any thing but what was consistent with truth, and had pointed out the very article in which he was deficient. On this Elihu continued his discourse to Job, in which he reprimanded him more severely than before for indulging himself in such expressions as were unwarrantable, and sounded very harsh and ungrateful. He told him that, through his impatience, and the anxiety of his mind, he had complained, more than once, that the Almighty had not done him justice; and that he destroyed the righteous and the wicked without making any distinction; all which rash assertions he overthrew, from the awful consideration of the absolute sovereignty, power, wisdom, and goodness of the Almighty. And concluded with pointing out to him that manner of deportment and discourse, which, in his opinion, would much better become him than that which he had hitherto used.

Job still remaining silent, Elihu prosecuted his discourse, and in order to convince him that it was highly indecent to plead his own innocence and integrity before God in that insolent manner he had done, he represented to him the infinite disproportion there was between man and his Maker, the latter of whom had such a paternal care and concern for all mankind, that it was evident he delighted not in their calamities,

but administered relief when he found them injured or oppressed, provided they made their applications to him with that humility and submission as became them.

Here Elihu paused again, but Job still continuing silent, he resumed his discourse, in which he reproved him for having used such rash expressions that even himself could not justify, and came closer than ever to the point in debate. In the prosecution of his discourse he endeavoured to shew, from the nature of the Divine Being, and the various methods of his over-ruling Providence, that, in case he had humbly submitted himself to God's chastisements, and bore them with patience and resignation, instead of insisting so presumptuously on his innocence and integrity, he would most assuredly have restored him to his former state of health and prosperity, for that he could exalt, or humble mankind, at his pleasure. He then concluded this part of his discourse with telling Job that he should have acquiesced, notwithstanding he could not account for the severity of his afflictions, which was the principal cause of his complaint; since mankind were incapable of comprehending even those works of God which, almost every moment, were before their eyes.

The arguments used by Elihu were so forcible that Job had not a word to utter in his defence, upon which Elihu again resumed his discourse. In the latter part of his last harangue he had expatiated on God's Omnipotence in general, and in this he proceeded to speak in particular of his power, which was so conspicuous in his thunder and lightning, hail, rain and snow, and in divers other surprizing works of nature. He then represented to Job that these were instruments, in God's hands, either for the reformation or punishment of mankind, and exhorted him to meditate seriously thereon, to confess his own weakness and ignorance with all due humility as became him, and to revere God's judgments; since it was the greatest arrogance and presumption that any man could be guilty of to make any attempt whatever to account for his Divine counsels. "He (said he) that attempts to do this will find the task insuperable: let him stretch his reason to the utmost pitch, he will soon find the mighty object will confound and distract him; his head, however steady, will turn giddy at such a height. Who can gaze on the sun with undazzled eyes, when the northern winds have swept away every cloud that could possibly obscure his lustre? Much less, who can pretend to look upon God, whose Majesty is most awful; and which we should only admire at an humble distance? We ought not to search into the nature of it too far, or to gaze upon it with too curious an eye; for let us make ever such bold attempts, our finite wisdom can never grasp the infinite, incomprehensible mind. His power is so transcendent and boundless, his counsels so wise, and his decrees so just, that no one ought to ask a reason for his proceedings. Or, if he should be so idle and presumptuous, God, who is the Lord and Sovereign of the whole universe, is under no manner of obligation to give him the least account. This should make all mankind stand in awe of him; this should confute all their peevish arguments, and teach them to adore him; for

for the Almighty regards the meek and lowly, but despises him who is proud, and wise in his own conceit."

As soon as Elihu had finished his discourse, God was pleased to interpose as a judge (in condescension to Job's repeated request) to determine at once this long and important debate. From an opening cloud an awful voice was heard as loud and dreadful as a tempest, and the words were of such formation as to strike a most sensible impression on the silent and afflicted Job. In the first place God convinced him of his weakness and ignorance, and made him sensible that it was an act of presumption in any one, however righteous or intelligent, to pry with too much curiosity into his secret counsels: and in order to humble him still farther he set before his eyes a great variety of his wonderful works; the manner in which the earth and heavens were created; the numberless and astonishing creatures that lived and moved, and had their being in the sea; but more especially shewed him how little he understood of those various meteors which are formed in the clouds. He then, after speaking of the admirable contexture of the beasts of the field and the birds of the air, proceeded to give several instances as demonstrations of his all-creating power; which he did in words to this effect:

"Presumptuous man! thou who art too curious, and wouldst pry, if thou couldst, into my secret counsels! Canst thou tell me when the wild-goats bring forth their young ones on the high and craggy rocks? Wast thou ever present, when any pregnant hind was bringing forth her young? Or, didst thou ever lend her the least assistance in her struggles to discharge her burden? Knowest thou the months that complete the first conception? Or, canst thou keep an account for her of the precise time that she shall be delivered? Say, hast thou ever seen her bow herself? Wast thou ever witness of the agonizing pains, the sorrows she undergoes in the exclusion of her births? And notwithstanding all the difficulties that thus attend her, the young ones grow fat and strong without their nurse; for they range immediately through the open fields for their subsistence, and return no more to the mother-hind.—This instance of the Divine power may be thus paraphrased:

Know'st thou how many moons, by me assign'd,
Roll o'er the mountain-goat, and forest-hind,
While pregnant they a mother's load sustain?
They bend in anguish, and cast forth in pain.
Hale are their young, from human frailties freed,
Walk unsustain'd, and unassisted feed;
They live at once, forsake the dam's warm side,
Take the wide world, with nature for their guide;
Bound o'er the lawn, or seek the distant glade,
And find a home in each delightful shade.

"Tell me, Job, who imparted the whole sense of liberty to the wild-afs, that bravely disdain a master, and will not be controuled by rein or bit, as other creatures are? Who made

that wide difference between him and them? As it was not my pleasure to lay any ignominious burthen on his back, so I assigned him to the spacious desert for his habitation; where he looks with disdain on those who frequent populous cities, and never feels, nor hears the driver's whip. He scorns to be confined within the meadows, but flies to the mountains, where he ranges Lord of himself, and uncontrouled; where he finds pasturage sufficient for his daily subsistence.

Didst thou from service the wild-afs discharge,
And break his bonds, and bid him live at large,
Thro' the wide waste, his ample mansion, roam,
And lose himself in his unbounded home?
By nature's hand magnificently fed,
His meal is on the range of mountains spread;
As in pure air aloft he bounds along,
He sees in distant smoke the city-throng;
Conscious of freedom, scorns the smother'd train,
The threat'ning driver, and the servile rein.

"Thou, who wouldst willingly have all creatures subservient to thy will, go to the unicorn*, and try if thou canst prevail on him tamely to submit to thy directions. Will he not refuse thy crib, and proffer'd corn? Will he yield his neck ignobly to thy yoke? Canst thou make him, like thy oxen, go to the plough, or draw thy harrow over the vallies? Wilt thou, because his strength is great, depend on his doing the remainder of thy business in the field? Or wilt thou suffer him to bring thy harvest home, when it is gathered, and lay it in thy barns?

Will th' unicorn, which knows no Lord but me,
Lowe at the crib, and ask an alms of thee?
Submit his unworn shoulder to the yoke,
Break the stiff clod, and o'er thy furrows smoke?
Since great his strength, go trust him, void of care,
Lay on his neck the toil of all the year;
Bid him bring home the seasons to thy doors,
And cast his load among the gather'd stores.

"Who was it that dy'd the peacock with such variegated colours? To whom is he indebted for his long, gaudy train?

How rich the peacock! what bright glories run
From plume to plume, and vary in the sun?
He proudly spreads them to the golden ray,
Gives all his colours, and adorns the day;
With conscious state the spacious round displays,
And slowly moves amid the waving blaze.

"Tell me, Job, who is it that assumes the honour to himself of forming the beauteous plumes of the ostrich? Or to whom is she indebted for her strong and spacious wings? Her inward qualities, however, are no ways answerable to her external beauty; for she has no forecast or contrivance in her. She never repairs to any solitary recesses in order to conceal her eggs, but drops them any where, regardless of the place, and leaves them, without the least thought or concern, exposed on the warm sands to be nourished by the sun, or perhaps trodden under foot

* That the unicorn mentioned here is the rhinoceros, there is not the least reason to doubt, because that animal is very common in Arabia, and has but one horn. It may be far-

ther added, that it is a most fierce creature, and that there are no instances on record of any one of them having been ever thoroughly tamed.

foot by man or beast †. The careless, improvident bird has no natural tenderness or paternal regard for her offspring, but is hardened against them as if they were not hers; she is under no apprehensions of the danger to which they are exposed. But the reason of this negligence and careless deportment is this, that I have not given her that prudence and discretion which I have conferred on other creatures. However, though I have imparted to her but a small share of understanding, I have yet given her so much as is requisite for her preservation; for when she exalts her neck, and tries the strength of her wings, she is so swift, that she dreads not her enemy; she scorneth the horse and his rider.

Who in the cruel Ostrich has subdu'd
A parent's care, and fond inquietude!
While far she flies, her scatter'd eggs are found
Without an owner on the sandy ground;
Cast out on fortune, they at mercy lie,
And borrow life from an indulgent sky;
Adopted by the sun, in blaze of day,
They ripen under his prolific ray;
Unmindful she, that some unhappy tread
May crush her young in their neglected bed;
What time she skims along the field with speed,
She scorns the rider, and pursuing steed.

“ Who was it, Job, that gave the Horse that strength and courage so conspicuous in him above his fellow-brutes? Hast thou given him his confidence and his spirits? Is it thy thunder that clothes his stately neck? Or didst thou give him that majestic mane, whose flowing hairs, like forked lightning, wave in the wind, and dazzle the beholder's eye? Canst thou damp his hot blood, or make him spring away with fear as a grasshopper? When in the heat of battle he snorts, the fire and smok that from his nostrils roll are terrible. Proud and pampered he paws the ground, tears up the grassy turf, and spurns the sand around him. He glories in his strength, and when he hears the alarms of those who come to oppose him, he leaps, he bounds, he forward springs to meet the foe, regardless of their instruments of war. At fear he mocketh: he runneth on the very points of naked swords: he maketh his passage through ranks of armed men; and neither the noise of arrows that come whizzing by his ears, nor the glittering spear nor shield dismay him. He seems to fly, and his swift motion shakes the solid earth; and when he hears the shrill music's sound, for joy he scarce believes it to be the trumpet's voice. But as the noise approaches, he neighs, he prances with delight, he snuffs the air, and hopes the promised battle.—This description of the horse is thus beautifully paraphrased by the celebrated Dr. Young:

Survey the warlike horse! Didst thou invest
With thunder his robust, distended chest?
No sense of fear his courage great allays,
'Tis dreadful to behold his nostrils blaze;

To pace the vale he proudly takes delight,
And triumphs in the fulness of his might;
High-raised, he snuffs the battle from afar,
And burns to plunge amid the raging war;
And mocks at death, and throws his foam around,
And in a storm of fury shakes the ground;
How does his firm, his rising heart advance
Full on the brandish'd sword, and shaken lance,
While his fixt eye-balls meet the dazzling shield,
Gaze, and return the lightning of the field?
He sinks the sense of gain in gen'rous pride,
Nor feels the shaft that trembles in his side;
But neighs to the shrill trumpet's dreadful blast,
Till death---and when he groans, he groans his last.

“ Observe the Hawk how she mounts upwards, and pursues her prey, swift as a ray of light. Didst thou stretch out her wings? Or didst thou instruct her, at the approach of winter, to repair to the southern parts of the earth for the enjoyment of a warmer climate?

Who taught the Hawk to find, in seasons wise,
Perpetual summer, and a change of skies?
When clouds deform the year, she mounts the wind,
Shoots to the south, nor fears the storm behind:
The sun returning, she returns again,
Lives in his beams, and leaves ill days to men.

“ Which of all the feather'd train, like the eagle, can approach the sun? Is it to thee she is indebted for her strength or swiftness? Was it through thy wisdom or direction that she builds her nest where no mortal can reach it? She settles her abode on the summit of the highest rocks. Her fortress is kept in the midst of such craggy cliffs as are insuperably steep. There she towers, and looks down with a becoming pride on all the birds beneath. Such is the sharpness of her sight, that she surveys the distant valleys with a glance, and darts down, like a thunder-bolt, through the yielding air to truss her prey, which, when she has seized and torn to pieces, she carries to her young, who suck with greediness the blood; and, after a battle, wherever the dead carcases lie, there is she to be found hovering over them.”

Tho' strong the Hawk, tho' practis'd well to fly,
An Eagle drops her in a lower sky;
An Eagle, when deserting human light,
She seeks the sun in her unwearied flight:
Did thy command her yellow pinion lift
So high in air, and seat her on the clift,
Where far above thy world she dwells alone,
And proudly makes the strength of rocks her own?
Thence wide o'er nature takes her dread survey,
And with a glance predestinates her prey;
She feasts her young with blood, and hov'ring o'er
Th' unslaughter'd host, enjoys the promis'd gore.

These instances of the great and superior power of God over all his creatures roused the silent Job, who expressed his consciousness thereof, and acknowledged his own insignificance, in words to this effect: “ Behold! (said he) by thy heavenly light I am convinced that I am a miserable, wretched creature; that I am altogether

† Dr. Shaw tells us, that the Arabs, in their annual excursions, often meet with the nests of ostriches in which are great numbers of eggs, and they are left in so careless a manner in the road, covered over with sand, that travellers often

tread upon them, and break them to pieces. He adds that the mothers are so unnatural, that they often eat their young, as soon as they are hatched.

gether unworthy of being admitted into thy awful presence. I am so confounded and amazed, that I know not how to withstand the force of thy resistless arguments, or to answer one single question which thou hast been pleased to state. And for that reason I am determined henceforth to hold my peace. I am conscious to myself that the words which I have uttered already, though but few, are too many, and too evidently shew that I have been guilty of the highest presumption. I will therefore, prostrate myself before thee, and revere thy goodness, but never murmur, or complain, as I have done, any more."

The Almighty, in order to humble Job still farther, and to shew him his weakness, as well as presumption, in attempting to contend with him, gave him two other instances of his superior and all creating power; which he did in describing the peculiar properties of the Behemoth, or River-Horse, and the Leviathan, or Crocodile, both inhabitants of the river Nile in Egypt. These additional instances of the great wisdom, power and majesty of God shone so conspicuous, and set Job's errors before him in so strong a light, that he submitted himself with all due humility to his Maker, and made a frank confession of his faults in words to this effect:

"I am now, O Lord, fully convinced that thy wisdom is incomprehensible, and that thy power is as extensive as thy will: I am abundantly satisfied that nothing can prevent thee from completing thy designs; and that no art or compulsion can possibly defeat thy all-wise purposes. And as thou hadst reasons, best known to thyself, for humbling me, and laying my honour in the dust, so I am sensible, that if thou wert so pleased, thou hast power sufficient to place me in a much happier state and condition than I was in at first. As I am conscious to myself, that all thy reprehensions have been perfectly just, I readily acknowledge that I have been very ignorant, presumptuous, and foolish, in talking after the manner I have done, of the various dispensations of thy Divine Providence. I have presumed, I freely confess, to discourse on subjects far above my comprehension; on such things as I ought humbly to admire, and not with pride and insolence to blame or censure."

"O let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. I will never presume in future to account for thy handy-works, or to pry into the ways of thy Providence, which are dark and intricate: all I request is, that thou wilt condescend to instruct me, and let thy heavenly light dispel those thick shades of error that darken my understanding. I had, indeed, before entertained some faint and imperfect ideas of thy greatness, wisdom, and power; but now those attributes are more clearly revealed to me by the appearance of thy awful Majesty. For which reason I am stung with remorse, and can scarce forgive myself for uttering my indecent complaints. I condemn myself for bearing thy afflicting rod with so much reluctance; for wishing, in my despair, so earnestly to die, and for surmising that the righteous were no longer the objects of thy favour or concern. I heartily re-

pent of my arrogant discourses, and of the unjust accusations which I have brought against thy government. I am grieved that I have expressed so much impatience, under my afflictions, and that I have endeavoured to justify myself against my God. All thy works are marvellous and incomprehensible!

Thou canst accomplish all things, Lord of Might,
And every thought is naked to thy sight:
But oh! thy ways are wonderful, and I ye
Beyond the deepest reach of mortal eye.
Oft have I heard of thine Almighty pow'r,
But never saw thee till this dreadful hour:
O'erwhelm'd with shame the Lord of Life I see,
Abhor myself, and give my soul to thee:
Nor shall my weakness tempt thy anger more:
Man was'nt born to *question*, but *adore*.

This ingenuous confession was so pleasing to the Almighty, that his wrath was perfectly appeased, and he no more chastised Job; but directing his voice to Eliphaz, who was Job's severest accuser, spoke to him in words to this effect: "I am angry not only with thee, but thy two friends; for thou hast made a very unjust and partial construction of the afflictions which it was my pleasure to send upon Job, whom, though I do not pronounce absolutely guiltless, yet I acknowledge him to be my servant, and to have spoken of me with more wisdom than thou hast done, or any of thy companions. Take, therefore, unto thee seven bullocks and seven rams, and carry them to my servant Job, whom I constitute and ordain to be thy priest, to offer up as a burnt-offering in thy favour, and as a testimony of my absolute dominion over all my creatures. When thou hast so done he shall intercede for thee, and shall obtain thy pardon; for I have a great affection for him, and will be indulgent to thee and thy friends for his sake. Take care that this command be obeyed without delay, lest my vengeance should fall with weight on your devoted heads; because, as I have before said, all of you have put an evil construction on my ways, and set my Providence in a very unfair and disadvantageous light, and would not hearken to my servant Job, notwithstanding he told you that your assertions were false and groundless."

Eliphaz and his two companions made their due submission to the Almighty, and entreated Job to be their intercessor. Job accordingly offered up his prayers to God in their behalf, which were graciously received, and the offenders, in consequence thereof, freely forgiven.

At the very instant that Job was discharging this charitable duty in behalf of his friends, the Lord was pleased to shew several extraordinary marks of his Divine favour; nor did he cease bestowing his bounties, till he had not only re-established him in his former state of health, but made him twice as rich as he was before his calamities were inflicted on him.

When Job's kindred and friends heard of his happy restoration, they went in throngs to testify their joy on the occasion. After having condoled with him, and expressed their sorrow on account of the losses and misfortunes he had met with, they congratulated him on his sudden and unexpected recovery; and as a testimony of their

their respect, each made him a present, the value of which was proportioned to their respective circumstances.

Thus was the Lord pleased to make the innocent Job miserable for a time in order to augment his happiness; for instead of seven thousand sheep and three thousand camels which were taken from him, he had soon after fourteen thousand of the former, and six thousand of the latter. He had a thousand yoke of oxen instead of five hundred, and his she-asses were multiplied in proportion. His wife also became very fruitful, and brought him seven sons and three daughters, which was the very same in number with those he had lost.

In order to perpetuate the memory of so extraordinary a deliverance, Job called the eldest of his daughters *Jemima*, which signifies *the day*, because of the felicity he now enjoyed after he had been so long obscured in the dismal night of affliction. His second daughter he called *Kezia*, which signifies *an aromatic spice*, in allusion to his having been released from his filthy ulcers. The youngest daughter he named *Keren-happuch*, which signifies *plenty rested*, or rather *the Horn of Varnish*, because God had wiped away the tears that had bedewed his cheeks. These three daughters were all remarkable for their personal accomplishments, there not being any in the whole country whose charms were so conspicuous; and their father did not (as the usual custom then was) endow them only with a small portion of his effects, but fixed them as coheirs with his sons, and appointed that they should have a proportionable share of his inheritance.

After this glorious turn of fortune, this happy restoration of himself and family, Job's years were augmented as well as his possessions. The Lord was pleased to add an hundred and forty years to those he had lived before his misfortunes; so that the good man had the satisfaction to see his numerous progeny to the fourth generation. At length, fully satisfied, and full ripe with hoary age, he dropped into the grave—nor wished to live a moment longer.

We shall conclude our History of the Life and Transactions of the pious Job with a short view of his character, as represented by a very late and eminent writer.

The character of Job, says he, affords us a spectacle worthy of the Deity himself to look upon, viz. that of a pious and good man, combating adversity; and, amongst other miseries of an extraordinary kind, vexed with the unjust suspicions and peevish accusations of his mistaken friends.

And here we find him using every argument that could be thought of in his own defence, to cure them, if possible, of their mistake, and to persuade them of his innocence; appealing to the general course of Providence, which, for the most part, deals out things promiscuously, and often involves the good and bad in the same common calamity; directing them to instances within their knowledge, of such who had been as wicked as they were great, and yet had lived a long course of years in prosperity, and died at last in peace, and were buried with great pomp; so that no visible judgment had overtaken them, either in their lives, or at their deaths.

When this view of Providence, so true and evident to experience, still wanted force to remove an obstinate error, he puts them in mind of the future judgment, which was the proper season of reward and punishment; and declares, in the most solemn manner, his hopes of being acquitted there.

When all this would not do, but they still disbelieve and persecute him, he is driven to the last argument which a modest man would make use of, and appeals to his own public and private behaviour in the whole course of his life: and upon this occasion he displays such a set of admirable virtues, shews the piety, prudence, the humanity of his conduct, in so amiable a light, with such a noble freedom, and, at the same time, such an air of truth, that it is a matter of doubt whether there be any thing of the kind more beautiful or instructive in all antiquity; or perhaps a finer picture of a wise and good man was never drawn. How prudent and upright in his decisions, as a magistrate or judge! How just and benevolent in his domestic character, as the father of a family! How untractable to all allurements of pleasure, in the height of his prosperity, and how sensible to the complaints and miseries of others! And, above all, how remarkably pious in his principles! How careful to build his virtue upon its own solid basis, religion, or the fear of God! But with all these great and excellent qualities, we cannot but take notice of some little mixture of alloy and imperfection. For a perfect character, however it may have existed in idea, it is certain never yet appeared above once upon the real stage of the world.

We must forgive this good man, therefore, the little passionate complaints which the extremity of his sufferings sometimes forced from him. His despair and weariness of life; his often wishing for death; his eagerness to come upon his trial; his earnest requests, and even expostulations with his judge, to bring him to it, or to acquaint him with the reasons at least of these severe inflictions. These and the like, it must be owned, appear as shades and blemishes in the character of this great man, and may argue somewhat of impatience, even in this heroic pattern of patience.

A great deal, however, might be said in his excuse: as, that his afflictions had something in them very astonishing, and beyond the common measure; that the distempers of the body have oftentimes a natural tendency to produce black thoughts, and a despondency of mind: To which may be added, the rash censures and suspicions of his friends, as they affected his reputation, which, to a generous mind, is the most valuable thing in the world, next to his integrity: It is no wonder that a treatment so inhuman, so undeserved, so unexpected, should provoke to an extremity a person borne down already with the weight of his misfortunes.

These things might certainly be offered in excuse for the little blemishes which appear in the speeches and conduct of this great man. But after all, the best thing that can be pleaded in his behalf, and that which covers all his imperfections, is his own behaviour upon this occasion, and his making no excuse at all for them; but

as soon as ever he was brought to recollect his errors, immediately confessing them with great simplicity, and the most profound humility and contrition. *Then Job answered the Lord, and said, Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth: chap. xl. 3, 4. And again, I have uttered that I knew not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.—But now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself; and repent in dust and ashes. ch. lxii. 3, &c.*

The easiness and favour with which this hum-

ble acknowledgement was accepted by the Supreme Judge, and the bountiful reward bestowed upon this good man, as a present earnest of a still greater to be expected by him hereafter, will teach us this very acceptable and important truth: how ready God is to pass by the little weaknesses of man; where there is a tried and resolute integrity, still bent upon the doing of his duty; and determined, whatever may befall him, to adhere to God in all his trials and temptations:

CHAP. VIII.

Ezra, a priest and scribe, obtains permission of Ahasuerus, king of Persia, to go, with some other Jews, to Jerusalem, and at the same time receives a commission, empowering him to make a reformation both in church and state. He accordingly goes thither, and begins to execute his commission by making a reform among the people relative to their marriages. Nehemiah, cup-bearer to Ahasuerus, is sent to Jerusalem, with a commission to rebuild the walls of the city. He is interrupted in the execution of his commission by Sanballat, an officer of the Moabites, and Tobiab, a popular man among the Ammonites, notwithstanding which he carries on the work with great success. Sanballat and Tobiab concert several schemes for taking away Nehemiah's life, all of which prove abortive. Nehemiah, having finished the walls of Jerusalem, after surmounting a variety of difficulties, gives directions for the good order and government of the city. He suppresses the practice of usury among the people; and after obliging them to sign a covenant with him strictly to adhere to the laws of Moses, returns to the Persian court. During Nehemiah's absence from Jerusalem the people relapse into their former corruptions, owing to the mismanagement of Eliashib the high-priest. Nehemiah goes again to Jerusalem, and turns Tobiab, the Ammonite, out of an apartment in the temple, which had been assigned him by Eliashib. He orders the payment of the tithes, and makes the people pay a more strict attention to the sabbath. He dissolves unlawful marriages. His death.

HAVING made a long digression, in order to admit the life and transactions of Job, as related in the last chapter, we shall now resume our history of the Jews, which we shall prosecute with the most accurate circumspection from the last occurrence mentioned towards the close of the Sixth Chapter, namely, the punishment of the base and treacherous Haman, by means of Esther, the new queen of Ahasuerus, king of Persia.

In the seventh year of the reign of king Ahasuerus, Ezra (a priest descended from Seraiah the high-priest, who was slain by Nebuchadnezzar when he burnt the temple and city of Jerusalem) a man of great learning and well acquainted with the scriptures, and who had hitherto continued in Babylon, with others of the captivity that had not yet returned, asked permission of Ahasuerus to go to Jerusalem, and to take with him as many people of his own nation as were willing to accompany him.

Ahasuerus not only complied with Ezra's request, but likewise gave him an ample commission to take with him what he should think necessary both for his journey thither and service there. He furnished him with money to buy cattle for sacrifice, provisions of corn, wine, oil

and salt, and empowered him to draw from his public treasuries to the amount of one hundred talents of silver. He likewise granted to the priests, Levites, singers, porters, and Nethinims (or ministers of the House of God) an indemnity from all toll, tribute or custom; and empowered Ezra, at the same time, to appoint magistrates and judges over the people, to do justice among them, and instruct those who knew not the law of God.

Ezra returned thanks to God for having been pleased to incline the king's heart not only to permit him to go to Jerusalem, but likewise to furnish him with the means of making such contributions to the temple as might promote and establish the true religion. *Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers (said he) who hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the House of the Lord which is in Jerusalem: and hath extended mercy unto me before the king and his counsellors, and before all the king's mighty princes.*

Having made every necessary preparation for so long a journey, Ezra left Babylon on the first day of the first month (which is called Nisan, and answers to about the middle of our March) accompanied by no less than one thousand four hundred and ninety-six of his countrymen. When he

he came to the river Ahava*, he made a halt, and the people having erected tents according to his orders, they encamped there for three successive days. On the first day of their encampment Ezra took an account of the number of those who accompanied him, and not finding any Levites or Nethinims among them, he sent Eliezer, and some others, to Iddo; who was chief of the Nethinims at Casiphia, requiring him to send with them some officers fit for the service of the Lord's house. Iddo readily obeyed Ezra's orders, furnishing the messengers with thirty-eight Levites, and two hundred and twenty Nethinims, all of whom they brought safe to the camp.

Ezra, considering the great charge of money and plate with which he was entrusted, and the dangers to which both he and his people might be exposed in their march, proclaimed a fast throughout the camp, to implore the Divine protection over them and their substance. He might, indeed, for asking, have had a convoy from the king, but recollecting he had told him that the hand of their God would be upon them, he thought proper to decline it, lest the king should think that what he had said was no more than mere boasting, and that he distrusted the power and favour of *him*, of whom he had spoken with such distinguished confidence.

Having thus implored the Divine protection, Ezra ordered the people to strike their tents, and prepare themselves for prosecuting their journey. This being done, he delivered by weight to twelve of the priests all the gold, silver and vessels, which the king and his counsellors had given him as an offering to the house of the Lord; strictly enjoining them to keep this treasure safe till they came to Jerusalem, and there to deliver it by weight to the chief of the priests and Levites, as they had received it of him.

Ezra and his company quitted the place of their encampment on the twelfth day after their leaving Babylon, and arrived safe at Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month, called Ab, (which answers to the middle of our July) so that they were exactly four months on their journey.

On their arrival at Jerusalem they took three days to refresh themselves, and on the fourth the priests delivered the treasure† by weight into the house of the Lord to those who were appointed to receive it, and a proper inventory was taken of the whole. They then offered up a burnt-offering of twelve bullocks for the twelve tribes, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven lambs, and twelve he-goats; after which Ezra delivered the king's commission to the proper officers, who,

in obedience thereto, furnished the people with all things necessary for the service of the temple.

Ezra had not been long at Jerusalem before complaint was made to him by some of the heads of the Israelites, that not only the people, but likewise many of the priests and Levites, had intermixed with the descendants of the ancient inhabitants of the country, namely, the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Ammonites, &c. contrary to the express commands of their great legislator Moses. Ezra was greatly grieved at this intelligence, and expressed his sorrow by renting his mantle, and tearing off the hair from his head; and those who had any fear or concern on them, came to him, and bemoaned the transgression of those that had been captives, and were lately drawn into the commission of these wicked practices. Ezra continued in this melancholy situation till the time of evening sacrifice, when, falling on his knees, and spreading out his hands, he made an humble confession and prayer to God in words to this effect: "Our transgressions (said he) O Lord, are so great, that I am ashamed to look up unto thee. We have been sinners from the beginning; for which thou didst deliver our kings and priests into the hands of the heathen kings. But thou hast shewed us favour in our captivity, and inclined the hearts of the kings of Persia to be merciful to us, and restore us to Jerusalem. And now, what shall we say for our ungrateful disobedience in neglecting thy commands? Thou hast forbidden us to defile ourselves with the abominations of the people of the land, to marry their daughters, or partake of their wealth; and yet we have broke thy commandment, and made affinity with them. Thou mayest justly be angry with us, till thou hast consumed us: but thou, O Lord, art righteous, and hast preserved us to this day. Behold, we are before thee in our sins, and what can we say in justification of our conduct? *We have forsaken thy commandments, which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets, saying, The land unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land with the filthiness of the people with their abominations which have filled it from one end to the other with their uncleanness.*

As soon as Ezra had finished his confession, which he did in a flood of tears, the people expressed the sense they had of their transgressions by shedding tears likewise. This circumstance attracted the peculiar attention of one Shechaniah, a considerable person among the Jews who, in behalf of his countrymen, addressed Ezra in words to this effect: "We have, said he, sinned

* This was a river in Assyria, and, very probably, that which ran along the Adiabene, where the river Diava, or Adiava, is known to be, and on the banks of which Ptolemy places the city of Abane, or Aavane. Here, some imagine, was the country, which, in the second book of Kings (chap. xvii. 24.) is called Ava, from whence the king of Assyria removed the people called Avites into Palestine, and settled some of the captive Israelites in their stead. It was a common thing for those who travelled from Babylon to Jerusalem, in order to avoid the scorching heat of the desert Arabia, to direct their course northward at first, and then, turning to the west, to pass through Syria into Palestine. But Ezra had a farther reason for taking the rout

he did; for, as he intended to get together as many Israelites as he could to carry with him to Jerusalem, he took his course this way, and made an halt in the country of Ava, or Ahava, from whence he might send emissaries into the Caspian mountains, to invite such Jews as were there to come and join him.

† This treasure was of very considerable value. It consisted of an hundred talents of gold, six hundred and fifty of silver, and the silver vessels weighed an hundred talents; besides which there were twenty basons of gold of a thousand drachms, and two vessels of such fine copper as to be little inferior to gold.

“ ned in taking strangers to our wives; yet,
 “ considering the disposition of the people to
 “ repent, there is hope in Israel that God will
 “ be merciful. Let us therefore make a cove-
 “ nant with our God, to put away all the strange
 “ wives and their children, and do thou see that
 “ it be done as the law obligeth.”

This advice was readily approved of by Ezra, who immediately caused a proclamation to be made throughout the whole land, that the people should all assemble at Jerusalem within three days, on pain of being excommunicated, and all their possessions forfeited to the king. In consequence of this proclamation the people assembled at the time appointed, when Ezra, placing himself in the midst of the multitude, addressed them as follows: *Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives to increase the trespass of Israel. Now, therefore, make confession unto the Lord God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives.*

The multitude promised to do as Ezra directed, but desired him to consider, that as the number of those who had transgressed was exceeding great, the work could not be accomplished in one day. They therefore proposed that their rulers should answer for them, and that all those who, in the several cities, had taken strange wives, should come at appointed times to Jerusalem, and bring with them the elders of every city to certify that they were all the guilty persons in that place; and so to proceed till the Lord was appeased. This proposition being approved of commissioners were appointed to inspect into the affair, who, in the space of three months, made such accurate enquiries that this great enormity was removed, and a thorough reformation brought about among the people.

On the death of Zerubbabel (the governor of Judah and Jerusalem) the administration, both of civil and ecclesiastical affairs, devolved upon Ezra, who continued in that high office till the twentieth year of the reign of king Ahasuerus, when it fell into the hands of Nehemiah, a very religious and good man among those of the captivity, and who was a particular favourite with the king.

Nehemiah, from his office (which was that of cup-bearer * to the king) constantly resided in the palace of Shushan, and by his great familiarity with his prince, had frequent opportunities of doing acts of benevolence to his distressed countrymen. It happened one day that Nehemiah, seeing some people of Judah, who had been at Jerusalem, asked them some questions concerning their brethren in that city, as also with respect to the state of the place itself. They told him that the city was in a very miserable condition indeed, for that its walls † were broken

down; and its gates burnt, so that the inhabitants lay open not only to the incursions and insults of their enemies, but likewise to the contempt and reproach of their neighbours.

This melancholy intelligence greatly affected Nehemiah, who, for some days, fasted and prayed in behalf of his distressed brethren at Jerusalem, acknowledging their faults, deprecating God's judgments, and humbly beseeching him that he would be pleased to favour the design which he had conceived of asking the king's permission to go to Jerusalem. “ O Lord God of heaven (said he) that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him, and observe his commandments: let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, both night and day, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned. We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses. Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations: but if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them, though there were of you cast out into the uttermost parts, yet will I gather them from thence, and I will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there. Now these are thy servants, and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand. O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name; and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.”

Nehemiah's long course of mourning and pungent sorrow for the sad state of his countrymen at Jerusalem, had made such an alteration in his countenance, that when it came to his turn to wait on the king, he could not help taking notice of it, and therefore asked what was the cause of so strange an alteration. Nehemiah was at first struck with fear, but recollecting himself a little, and considering the great esteem in which he was held by the king, he frankly discovered to him the true cause of his grief. *Why (said he) should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?* The king asked him what it was that he requested; upon which Nehemiah replied, *If it please the king, and if thy servant has found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the place*

* This was a place of great honour and advantage in the Persian court, because of the privilege the person who enjoyed it had of being frequently in the king's presence, and thereby having the opportunity of obtaining such favours as he might have occasion to require at his hands. That it was a place of great advantage appears evident from Nehemiah's gaining those immense riches, which enabled him, for so long a time (see Nehemiah v. 14, 19.) out of his own private purse, to live in his government with the greatest splen-

dor, without applying to the people to discharge the expences of so high an office.

† The commissions, which had hitherto been granted the Jews, were supposed to extend no farther than to the building of the temple, and their own private houses; and therefore the walls and gates of their city lay in the same ruinous condition in which they had been left after the destruction of the place by king Nebuchadnezzar.

place of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it †.

Ahasuerus, through the intercession of his queen, who was then sitting with him, readily granted Nehemiah's request, and at the same time gave him a full commission (as his governor of the province of Judea) to repair the walls of Jerusalem, to set up the gates, and fortify the city in the same manner as it was before it was dismantled and destroyed by the Babylonians; but upon this condition, that he should return at a certain time which he had stipulated. He likewise gave him letters to all the governors of the respective provinces in his dominions, commanding them to give him every necessary assistance in carrying on the work. He sent an order to Asaph, the keeper of the forests in that part of the country, to furnish him with whatever timber he might want, not only for the reparation of the towers and gates of the city, but for building himself an house to live in as governor of the place; and, to do him still more honour, he sent a guard of horse, under the command of some of the captains of his army, to conduct him safe to his government.

When Nehemiah arrived at Jerusalem, the people, attracted by the grandeur of his appearance, though not knowing his business, paid him the most distinguished respect. In the evening of the third day after his arrival he went, accompanied by some few of his attendants, privately round the city to take a view of the walls, which he found in a very ruinous and deplorable condition. The next day he summoned together the heads of the people, who being assembled, he addressed as follows: *Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach* §. He then told them how gracious God had been to them in giving him instructions in this affair, and how favourable the king was in permitting him to come thither for their benefit. After this he produced his commission and letters for the purpose, which being read to them, their drooping spirits were so revived, that they joyfully and unanimously cried out, *Let us rise up and build*.

For the better and more speedy execution of the work, Nehemiah divided the people into se-

veral companies, and assigned to each the quarter where they were to work, reserving to himself the reviewal and direction of the whole. But no sooner had they made the necessary preparations for beginning the work than Sanballat, an officer of the Moabites, and Tobiah, a man of note among the Ammonites (two bitter enemies to the Jewish nation) began to scoff and ridicule their undertaking, and to make them appear contemptible in the eyes of their natural enemies the Samaritans. Sanballat, in speaking of the work to the Samaritan army, said, *What do these feeble Jews mean? Will they fortify themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they make an end in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?* And to back him in this scornful address, Tobiah the Ammonite said, *Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall*.

As the work, however, advanced they changed their note, and, apprehending themselves in danger from the growing greatness of the Jews, they resolved, if possible, to put a stop to their farther progress. To this purpose they entered into a confederacy with some neighbouring nations to come upon them by surprize, demolish their works, and put them all to the sword. But Nehemiah, having notice of their horrid design, sent out scouts daily to observe their motions, and placed a guard well armed to defend and encourage the workmen. He likewise gave orders that each of the men should have their arms of defence near at hand, in case they should be suddenly attacked, while himself went often among them, encouraging them, by his precept and example, to trust in the Lord, and, in his speeches and exhortations, putting them frequently in mind, that (in case they were compelled to fight) it would be for the security of their wives, their brethren and children.

In this posture of defence did they continue for some time, when they were informed that Sanballat and his party, finding their design discovered, and the Jews prepared to receive them, had laid aside their intended expedition. This greatly lessened their fears, and they went on boldly with the work, but with such caution, that, to prevent any surprize, they wrought with their weapons by them; and because, by reason of

† There is a concern due to one's own country, which cannot be extinguished by the pleasure or plenty of any other. It is natural to be deeply affected at the misfortunes, or deaths of our nearest friends and relations, at what distance soever we are from them; nor can any prosperity in another country hinder or excuse a man for not being affected at the calamity that may befall his own. Nehemiah was in no mean station, when he was cup-bearer to Ahasuerus, and we may very reasonably believe, by the grace and bounty he shewed towards him, that he might have had any honour or preferment he would have demanded in that great and flourishing empire. But when that great king discerned that there was sorrow of heart in his countenance, and demanded the reason of it, he made no other answer than this, *the place of my fathers' sepulchres lieth waste*; and when the king so kindly invited him to ask some favour worthy of his royal bounty, he would require nothing else but, *Send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it*. A man of a generous spirit will naturally be inclined, if in his power, to give relief to his country, more especially when he is sensible that it is afflicted with a general calamity.

§ The speech which Josephus puts into the mouth of Nehemiah on this occasion, is to the following effect: "You cannot but see and understand, you men of Judea, that we ourselves are, at this day, under the power and providence of the same Almighty and merciful God, that did so many things for our forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, out of a gracious regard to their piety and justice: and it is by the favour of that God, that I have now obtained leave from the king to enter upon the rebuilding of your wall, and the putting an end to the work of the temple that is yet unfinished. But taking this for granted, that you live among a sort of malicious and spiteful neighbours, who would do all that is to be done in nature, for the crossing of your design, when they come once to see you heartily intent upon the undertaking, I shall therefore recommend it to you, in the first place, resolutely and fearlessly to cast yourselves upon God, who will most certainly defeat all the practices of your enemies; and, in the next place, to ply your business day and night, without any intermission either of care or of labour, this being the proper season for it."

of the great length of the wall they were obliged to be at some distance from each other, Nehemiah ordered a trumpeter always to attend, giving instructions to the people, that wherever they should hear the sound of the trumpet, immediately to repair to the spot, assuring them that however forcibly they might be attacked by the enemy, they need not to fear, for that the Lord was on their side, and would fight for them.

But while they were all busily employed in building the walls, there happened a kind of mutiny among the common people, which might have been of fatal consequence had it not been for the timely interposition of Nehemiah. The more wealthy among the Jews, taking advantage of the meaner sort, exacted a very heavy usury on such whose necessities obliged them to borrow money for the support of themselves and families. This oppression reduced them so low that they were obliged to mortgage their lands, vineyards, olive-yards and houses, to buy provisions, as also to pay the king's tribute; but that which most affected them was, they were even compelled to sell their children, and subject them to a state of bondage.

As soon as Nehemiah heard of these base proceedings, and the distresses of the common people, he was greatly afflicted, and resolved to remove so great an iniquity. To effect this, he called together a general assembly of the richer part of the Jews, to whom he set forth the nature of the offence they had committed, how great a breach it was of the Divine law, and how heavy an oppression it was on their brethren; what handle it might give their enemies to reproach them, and how much it might provoke the wrath of God against them all. Therefore, said he, *refere, I pray you, to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their olive-yards, and their houses; also the hundredth part of the money, and of the corn, the wine, and the oil, that ye have exacted of them.*

The oppressive Jews, being thoroughly sensible of the justness of Nehemiah's accusations, promised to do as he directed. But this not satisfying him, he obliged them to take an oath strictly to observe it, and to prevent their violating the oath they had taken, he, by way of imprecation, shook the middle part of his vest, saying, *So God shake out every man from his house and from his labour that performeth not this promise, even thus be he shaken out, and emptied.* They all repeated their promise of obeying Nehemiah's orders, which having strictly done, the common people were satisfied, and prosecuted their work with great cheerfulness and diligence.

These usurers had a most excellent example before them against their base practices in the person of Nehemiah, who was so far from countenancing any manner of oppression, that he did not even accept the daily revenue of forty shekels of silver, and the constant furniture of his table with provisions; but remitted these, and all other advantages of his place, that might any way be troublesome and chargeable to the people. Nay, he not only refused the allowance which was due to him as governor, but, at his own charge, kept open house, entertaining every day at his table an hundred and fifty of the Jews and their ru-

lers, besides strangers; for which he constantly allowed an ox, six fat sheep, and fowl in proportion, and, on every tenth day, a great plenty of wine. Besides this, he gave many rich presents to the temple, and, by his generous example, encouraged others, both princes and people, to do the like.

The successful management of Nehemiah in carrying on the building of the walls of Jerusalem so irritated Sanballat and his party, that, finding they could not attack him by open force, they had recourse to craft and stratagem; designing, if possible, to take away his life. To this purpose, under pretence of ending the difference between them in an amicable manner, they sent to invite him to a conference in a certain village in the plain of Ono, a place belonging to the tribe of Benjamin, designing, when they had him there, to do him a mischief. But Nehemiah, very probably suspecting their design, returned for answer, "that the work in which he was engaged required his personal attendance, and therefore he could not come." They repeated this message four times, and Nehemiah as often returned the same answer. At length Sanballat, perceiving that Nehemiah was too cautious to be ensnared by a general invitation, resolved to try him by a more personal expedient that should immediately concern him, and, on pretence of clearing himself from an accusation of no less than treason, oblige him to come to him. He therefore the fifth time sent his servant to him with an open letter, the contents of which were to the following effect: "That it was currently reported he was building the walls of Jerusalem only to make it a place of strength, to support his intended revolt; that, to this purpose, he had suborned false prophets to favour his design, and to encourage the people to choose him king; and that therefore, to stop the course of these rumours, (which, in a short time, would certainly come to the king's ears) he advised him to come to him, that they might confer together, and take such resolutions as might be thought necessary."

Nehemiah, knowing his own innocence, easily saw through this shallow contrivance, and being resolved to make an end of the work he had so successfully began and carried on, returned Sanballat a short and contemptuous answer to this effect: "That all the accusations he had laid against him were false, and the inventions only of his own wicked heart."

Sanballat, finding himself again disappointed, and resolved, if possible, to accomplish his ends, hit upon another project, which he endeavoured to carry into execution. He had bribed to his interest one Shemaiah, the son of Delaiah the priest, a great favourite of Nehemiah. This person (according to the plot between him and Sanballat) pretended to the gift of prophecy; and therefore, when Nehemiah went one day to his house, he foretold that his enemies would make an attempt to murder him that very night, for which reason he advised him to go with him into the inner part of the temple, and to secure themselves by shutting the doors. But though Nehemiah did not apprehend the other's design, yet, through a sense of honour and religion, he positively declared, that whatsoever might be the consequence,

consequence, he would not quit his station, because it would badly become a man in his character to seek for refuge when he saw danger approaching. *Should such a man as I (said he) flee? and who is there that being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in.*

Thus did this scheme likewise prove equally abortive with the rest; and tho' Nehemiah knew not at the time the design that was laid against him, yet he afterwards discovered the whole plot, and chastised Shemaiah for his perfidy in a manner he justly deserved.

These, and many other difficulties, the good Nehemiah had to contend with; but by God's assistance, he overcame them all, and in the space of fifty-two days, the whole work was completed.

Nehemiah had surmounted all the difficulties thrown in his way to impede the building of the walls, but he was still greatly perplexed, on account of the treachery of some of his own people. The princes of Judah, as they had all along done, held a correspondence with Tobiah, which he had so improved, that they gave him a particular account of every transaction that took place at Jerusalem; and swore to him they would continue so to do while it remained in their power. By these means Tobiah gained a strong party to his interest, and to such lengths did they carry their attachment to him, that they had the impudence to speak in commendation of him even in the presence of Nehemiah. This came to the ears of the vain Ammonite, who, on that account, looked with such contempt on Nehemiah, that he sent him several very insolent letters; but Nehemiah treated them all with disdain, well knowing that while he had God on his side he had no reason to be fearful of the threats of men.

Though Nehemiah was not any ways fearful of what his enemies could do to him, yet he thought it not impolitic to guard against any danger, that, from their treacherous and vile machinations, might arise either within or without the city. He therefore gave the charge of the gates to his brother Hanani*, and to Hananiah, marshal of his palace†, two men in whom he could confide, commanding them not to suffer the gates to be opened till some time after sun-rising, to see them safe barred at night, and to set the watch, which should consist of settled house-keepers, who were known to be careful and diligent men. As a farther security to the city, Nehemiah, observing that the number of its inhabitants was very disproportionate to so extensive a place, ordered that the principal people among the Jews throughout the kingdom, should make that their place of residence, and at the same time obliged the multitude to cast lots, whereby a tenth part of the whole were obliged

to fix their habitations within the city and its suburbs.

After Nehemiah had made these regulations for the security of the city, he and the people made their free-will offerings for the work of the Lord. Nehemiah gave to the treasury one thousand drachms of gold, fifty basons, and five hundred and thirty priests vestments. Some of the elders gave twenty thousand drachms of gold, and two thousand two hundred pieces of silver; and the rest of the people gave twenty thousand drachms of gold, two thousand pieces of silver and sixty-seven priests garments.

The affairs of the Jews being brought to this happy situation, and good order established among them, Ezra, the learned and pious scribe and priest, at the request of the people, produced the Book of the Law, which the Lord, by Moses, had commanded the children of Israel strictly to observe. On this occasion a pulpit was erected in the street before the water-gate, in which Ezra placed himself, that he might be the better seen and heard by the people. As soon as he had opened the book, the people all stood up, and he having given thanks to God, they lifted up their heads and cried Amen; after which they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with the most profound reverence. The company being divided into several parts, Ezra (assisted by thirteen priests) read and expounded the law to them, which they listened to with such attention and devotion, that, being thoroughly sensible of their past transgressions, they mourned and wept. But Ezra and his assistants comforted them, telling them, that was not a time to mourn and weep, because it was the sabbath, and therefore a day holy to the Lord God: that they should, on the contrary, be cheerful, eat and drink of the best, and send part of their provision to the poor, for whom there was not any thing provided. *Go your way (said he) eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord.* The people, in obedience to Ezra's orders, immediately dispersed, and strictly performed all that he had commanded.

The next day they assembled again, as did also the elders, priests and Levites, in order to be farther instructed by Ezra in the knowledge of the law. In the course of his expounding it to them, it appeared that the children of Israel should dwell in booths during the time of celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles (which was now at hand) and that they should cause proclamation to be made in all other cities, as well as in Jerusalem, that the people should go forth and get olive-branches, pine-branches, myrtle-branches, palm-branches, and branches of other trees thick with leaves, to make booths, in which they

* Nehemiah made choice of these two men, not from partial views to his own kindred, but because he knew they would acquit themselves in their employment with a strict fidelity. Hanani had given proof of his zeal for God and his country, in taking a tedious journey from Jerusalem to Shushan, to inform Nehemiah of the sad state of the city, and to implore his assistance for the relief of it. And the reason why he put such trust and confidence in Hananiah was, because he was a very conscientious man, and acted

upon religious principles, which would certainly keep him from those temptations of perfidy he might probably meet with in his absence, and against which a man, destitute of the fear of God, could not have a sufficient defence.

† The house in which Nehemiah lived, during his residence at Jerusalem, might very justly be called a palace, because he lived there in great splendor, though wholly at his own expence, and, as the king's viceroy, there gave audience to the people.

they were to reside during the celebration of the feast.

The people, who were now grown thoroughly sensible of the danger of transgressing the law, by woeful experience in their ancestors, previous to the day of the feast commencing, went out and brought branches to make themselves booths, which they did, some on the tops of their houses, others in their courts; some in the courts of the temple, and others in the streets. They kept the feast seven days, on each of which Ezra expounded some part or other of the laws of Moses; and the eighth day was held with a solemnity equal to any ever observed on a similar occasion.

A few days after the close of this feast, the Jews assembled again, but on a very different occasion. They appeared in sackcloth with earth upon their heads, fasting and mourning, confessing their own sins, and deprecating the judgments due to their fathers and their own iniquities. They then acknowledged the Omnipotence of God in creating and preserving all things; enumerated his gracious mercies to their fathers from the time of the covenant made with Abraham; recognizing the many and great instances of his Providence in delivering them from their enemies and persecutors; and, deploring their fathers and their own disobedience and rebellion, owned they were deservedly subject to very severe punishment. Finally, they made a covenant with the Lord that they would observe his laws as given by their great legislator Moses: and to oblige them to the more strict observance of this covenant, it was engrossed, and the princes, priests and Levites set their seals to it.

Nehemiah, having settled the affairs both of church and state in Jerusalem, and fully executed the business on which he went, returned, according to his promise, to the court at Shushan, and was very cordially received by the king. He had not, however, been long at Shushan before the people of Jerusalem relapsed into their old corruptions, and grew very irregular, all which was owing to the misconduct of Eliashib the high-priest, who, having the charge of the treasury, and being allied, by marriage, to Tobiah, the great enemy of the Jews, had furnished him with an apartment in the temple, in the place where they were accustomed to lay the offerings, and other holy things, appointed for the discharge of religious worship. This intimacy between Eliashib and Tobiah occasioned great mischief and confusion, for the people, by conversing with the heathens, soon broke the covenant they had so lately made, profaning the sabbath, and mixing in marriage with them.

As soon as Nehemiah heard of the people's apostacy, and the great misconduct of Eliashib, he obtained permission of the king to go again to Jerusalem, on his arrival at which place he found all things in the utmost disorder and confusion. He found the people were led away, and debauched in their principles, by a man who was an open enemy to them; and that an apartment in the House of God was adapted for one who was a declared enemy to his worship. This so inflamed the good Nehemiah, that he was re-

solved to put an end to such irregularities; but the corruption being grown general, he found himself under the necessity of using great caution in carrying his design into execution; for Tobiah had not only insinuated himself into the good opinion of the people in general, but had likewise got over to his interest the principal part of their leaders.

The first step Nehemiah took towards bringing about a reformation among the people, and convincing them of their errors, was, by causing the book of the law to be publicly read in their hearing. Among other passages that particularly engaged the attention of the people, was one to this effect: "That the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come unto the congregation of God for ever; because they met not the children of Israel with refreshments of bread and water when they came out of Egypt; but hired Balaam against them to curse them; though God turned the curse into a blessing."

No sooner did the people who had transgressed hear this part of the law, than they became thoroughly sensible of their error, and shewed their readiness to reform by separating themselves from the mixed multitude. This gave Nehemiah a convenient opportunity of removing Tobiah, who was an Ammonite, from that apartment in the temple, which he had for some time occupied by the permission and indulgence of Eliashib. The law being positive, and the people, by his prudent conduct, well inclined to obey it, he threw Tobiah's furniture out of the sacred chamber, caused it to be cleaned; and the vessels, together with the offerings and incense, which had been removed the better to accommodate Tobiah, to be reinstated.

Amidst the variety of corruptions that had taken place among the people during Nehemiah's absence from Jerusalem was one, of which (being a constant frequenter of the public worship, and zealously anxious for its promotion) he could not avoid taking particular notice. This was, the neglect of carrying on the daily service of the House of God, in a proper and decent manner; for the tythes, which were to maintain the priests and other officers of the temple, in their respective stations, being either embezzled by Eliashib, or withheld by the laity, they were reduced to the necessity of leaving the temple, and flying into the country in order to obtain a subsistence. To remedy this abuse, Nehemiah issued out a proclamation in the name of the king, ordering the people immediately to bring their tithes of corn, wine and oil, into the treasury of the temple; which orders being strictly obeyed, Nehemiah appointed proper officers to receive and distribute them, recalled the absent priests, and restored all things to the same order in which he had left them at the time of his returning to Shushan.

The next grievance the pious Nehemiah had to remove was, the profanation of the Sabbath, on which day the Jews had, during his absence, done all manner of servile works, such as treading their wine-presses, and bringing their corn, wine, grapes, figs, and all kinds of burthens, into Jerusalem: they likewise suffered the Tyrians, and other strangers, to bring fish, and all kind,

kinds of wares, into the city, and to dispose of them by public sale in the same manner as on other days of the week. To remove this violent profanation Nehemiah assembled the people together, and warmly expostulated with them on their carrying on such irreligious practices. *What evil thing* (said he) *is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath.* Having said this, to shew them that he was determined to remove this evil, and to bring about a thorough reformation amongst them, he gave strict orders that, towards the evening, before the commencement of the sabbath, the city gates should be shut, and not opened till the sabbath was over; and that this injunction might be duly observed, he appointed some of his own servants * to guard the gates, and strictly prohibited any kinds of burthens whatever to be brought into the city during the time of public worship.

The merchants and dealers (being unacquainted with Nehemiah's orders for preserving the sabbath) came, as usual, the preceding evening with their various articles for sale, but were greatly surprized to find the gates shut, so that they were obliged to take up their lodging without the walls of the city. This disappointment, however, did not check them from coming again on the evening preceding the next sabbath, upon which Nehemiah severely reprimanded them, telling them, if they offered to do so again he would have them taken into custody and punished. *Why* (said he) *lodge ye about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you.* In consequence of this they quietly departed, nor did they make any farther attempt to bring their goods to the city for sale on the sabbath. But Nehemiah, suspecting they might, by some contrivance or other, endeavour to break through his orders, and repeat their former bad practices, took a more secure method to prevent it, by commanding the Levites to cleanse themselves, take up their station at the gates of the city, and guard it, that the sabbath day might be kept strict and holy. Thus, with great care and difficulty, did this good man remove an evil that might have been of the most fatal consequences to the people, and once more established the true worship of the Lord in the city of Jerusalem.

We have already observed that Nehemiah, in order to convince the Jews of their transgressions, did, on his return from Shushan to Jerusalem, cause the Book of the Law to be read before the people, which expressly declared against their having any connection, or holding any conversation, with the Ammonites and Moabites; and that, in consequence thereof, those who had transgressed immediately separated

themselves from the multitude. But the case of mixed marriages, which had been made between the Jews and other nations, had taken such deep root, that Nehemiah found it a difficult matter to eradicate it. He well knew that such alliances, in former ages, had betrayed the Israelites into idolatry and other abominations, and was anxiously desirous to prevent, if possible, the like consequences in future. Finding, therefore, among the Jews some that had married women of Ashdod, Ammon and Moab, whose children, he observed, spoke neither the language of one parent or the other, he remonstrated with them on the impropriety of their marrying strange women, and pointed out the disagreeable consequences that must arise to their children, who would not only be induced to follow bad practices, but would, in time, entirely forget their native language. But the people, instead of paying a proper respect to Nehemiah's remonstrance, treated him with great indignity, insomuch, that, in the height of his resentment, he was provoked to curse them. The people, however, still continued obstinate, upon which Nehemiah was so irritated, that he ordered some of them to be taken into custody, and compelled the rest to swear by the Lord that they should not themselves, nor suffer any of their descendants, ever after to intermarry with other nations, expostulating with them in words to this effect: "Did not Solomon, king of Israel, sin by doing these things? Though there was no king among the heathens like unto him, though he was beloved of his God, who made him king over all Israel, yet he was betrayed by strange women to commit idolatry. Is it reasonable, then, that we should imitate the example to do this great evil, to transgress against our God, in marrying strange wives?" And to shew himself an impartial judge in his administration, Nehemiah made no distinction of quality or condition among those who continued to transgress, punishing all alike whom he found guilty. He gave an instance of this in the son of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high-priest, who, having married the daughter of Sanballat the Horonite, and refusing to part with her, was, by Nehemiah's orders, expelled the city, and obliged to fly to his father-in-law in Samaria.

Having thus put a stop to illegal marriages, Nehemiah prayed to God to do justice on those who defiled the priesthood, and violated the covenant between the priests and Levites and the Lord. *Remember them* (said he) *O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites.* He then proceeded to purge the place from all profanation of strangers, appointing the priests and Levites their several apartments and offices, setting

* From this it appears as if matters were come to such a pass that Nehemiah could not trust the common porters of the gates, and therefore appointed some of his own domestics, whom he knew would neither be careless nor corrupted, to see that the gates were kept shut, and all traffic prohibited. He, however, afterwards appointed the Levites to this office, because he not only thought that by virtue of

their character they would meet with more deference and respect than his domestic servants, because he resolved, when he should again leave Jerusalem (at which time he should be obliged to take his own servants with him) to have the watch continued, till the abominable custom of admitting dealers into the city on the sabbath-day should be quite annihilated.

setting out the wood for the offerings, and taking care of the first fruits.

This is the last act we find recorded of the good and pious Nehemiah. How long he lived after having made these reformatations among the people, whether he continued in his place of governor, or whether he died in Judea or in Persia, we are not informed. Josephus says that he died in a very advanced age; and this appears exceeding probable, for, at the time when his book ends he must have been at least seventy years of age. It is most likely that he continued in the government of Judea till the time of his death, supporting his character by the most exemplary zeal for religion, and the good of his nation; at the same time preserving the dignity of his office with the most magnificent hospitality.

Notwithstanding the great care and pains Nehemiah had taken to work a reformation among the people, it was not long after his death before they relapsed into their old enormities; for which reason we find the prophet Malachi (the last under the law, and who must have lived in the time of Nehemiah) sent to reprove them for their iniquity and scandalous proceedings. Having first demonstrated to them the particular esteem God had to the house of Israel in preference to that of Esau*, he taxed them with their ingratitude and neglect of his worship, but more especially the priests, whom he charged with irreligious and profane approaches to the altar, with corrupting the covenant of Levi, and, by giving a bad example in themselves, having occasioned many to violate the laws of their great legislator Moses. After this he threatened to judge them for all their sins, particularly for marrying with the heathens, and mocking God with their vain shews and pretences to religion, whilst they were notoriously guilty of adultery, perjury, oppression and other vices. He charged them with sacrilege, in not having paid the tythes and offerings, which being a part of the law, and appropriated to the maintenance of the priests and Levites, could not be detained without manifest violence and injustice; for which he severely reprov'd them. He then gave them a hint of God's calling the Gentiles, promising the coming of the Messenger of the Covenant whom they all desired. *Then (says he) shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be plea-*

sant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years. To give some comfort to the good and pious, who persevered in their duty, and steadfastly believed God's word, he declared that God would not forget his promise to their fathers, but would, in his own good time, fulfil it; assuring them, that when that day should come, the proud, and all that had done wickedly, should be utterly extirpated; but those that had feared the Lord should enjoy prosperity and abundance. He then promised them victory in those days over all their enemies, whom they should trample as dust under their feet; and strictly enjoined them not to forget the law of Moses the servant of the Lord, which he gave him in Mount Horeb. At length, as a forerunner of the completion of all that he had promised concerning the coming of the Messiah, he concluded by telling them that the Lord would send Elias the prophet before the great and terrible day, the happy effect of which would be, the turning the hearts of the fathers to their children; and of the children to their fathers.

Malachi, who, as we have already observed, was the last of the prophets (and whose Book closes the Old Testament) certainly lived in the time of Nehemiah; but at what period either of them paid the debt of nature, we are not any where informed. From the time of Malachi the prophetic spirit ceased, nor did any person afterwards appear, invested with Divine power, as of old, till the coming of John the Baptist, the great prophet and forerunner of Christ, the Redeemer of Mankind.

From the death of Nehemiah and Malachi, to the birth of Our Saviour, are reckoned, by the nearest computations, four hundred years, during which time various revolutions happened in the Jewish state, and the church of God underwent very great and heavy persecutions both from the Greeks and Romans; the particulars of which (having now done with the Sacred History) we must gather from the apocryphal books of the Maccabees, Philo Judæus, Josephus, and other historians, in order to continue the series of History to the time of Our Blessed Redeemer. But before we proceed to relate these particulars, we shall mention some things contained in the Old Testament, which, to prevent interrupting the thread of the History, could not with propriety, be hitherto inserted.

* In Malachi i. 3. it is said God hated Esau, and in other places the word *bate* is used in a severer sense than is meant, or the original allows. It should be considered that the word, which here, and in other places, on the like occasion, is rendered *to hate*, signifies also *to love less*, or *to take less care* of a thing, and not to wish or do it any harm. And that it is thus to be taken here appears from St. Matthew x. 37. where Our Saviour says, *He that loveth father or mo-*

ther more than me is not worthy of me. Therefore it is but reasonable to translate the words of the Apostle St. Paul, Rom. i. 13. taken out of Malachi i. 3. *I have loved Jacob more than Esau*: because God's dealing towards the Edomites does not shew any real hatred against them, but only that he favoured them less than the descendants of Jacob.

C H A P. IX.

Containing some Account of the Book of PSALMS; the PROVERBS of SOLOMON; the Book of ECCLESIASTES; and the SONG OF SOLOMON.

IN the life of David we have taken notice that he wrote a great number of songs, or spiritual hymns, and that, from his superior knowledge in music, he fixed tunes to many of them, which were played on the harp, an instrument invented by himself. We have also observed, in the life of the great and wise Solomon, that he composed a number of proverbs; (and there is no doubt but he was the author of the Book called *Ecclesiastes*) but we have not had the opportunity of properly noticing the excellencies of either of these great and distinguished compositions. We shall therefore make these the subject of the present chapter; beginning with

The Book of PSALMS.

This Book has always been accounted (by the church of God) amongst the rest of the Canonical Books of the Old Testament, as a rich jewel, whose price and value cannot be well conceived, much less fully expressed either in writing, or by word of mouth. Some have called it, *the Christian's garden of pleasure*, stored with most odoriferous flowers and exquisite fruits. Others have termed it his *Magazine and Armory*, where he is furnished with arms of proof for all combats whatever. Others again, his *Exchequer and Treasury*, being filled with the choicest riches. Others have considered it as the Anatomy of a Believer, an exquisite mirror of the inconceivable grace of God, and a perfect and full compendium of the Holy Bible; that is, of the law and gospel, and of the true knowledge of God, and of his pure worship. It contains many saving instructions concerning the existence of God, and of the Holy Trinity, the properties of the Divine nature, his eternal counsel, his holy word, and his wonderful works; but especially those of his beneficence and mercy towards his church, and of his just judgments upon the workers of iniquity.

In this book we read of the person and office of the Messiah, and of the extent and propagation of his kingdom throughout the nations of the world by the preaching of his gospel; as also concerning the sad and deplorable state of man under sin, of the nature and condition of regeneration, of true repentance, and of the love and fear of God. We likewise read of the nature of true faith, of trusting in *him* alone, and how we ought not to glory, but in *him*; of the certainty of salvation; of the continual war between the flesh and spirit, as also concerning the catholic church, gathered both from Jews and Gentiles; of ecclesiastical discipline; the com-

munion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and of life eternal.

We find also in this book all manner of spiritual exercises of piety, as patterns and forms of praising the holy name of God; of giving thanks for the benefits received at his hands; of promises and vows in acknowledgment and gratitude for mercies received; of a great number of fervent and earnest prayers for whatever can concern the glory of God, and the interest of believers, as well in general as particular, especially in all manner of crosses, calamities and afflictions; with abundance of holy meditations, solid and powerful comforts, and efficacious arguments, to strengthen us in faith, patience, hope, and all other Divine virtues and graces. Inasmuch that we cannot conceive any condition in which a believer may be in this life, whether of prosperity, or adversity; of temptation, or deliverance; of fighting, or victory; of health, or sickness, but he will find, in this book, a suitable entertainment to it, to the quieting of his conscience, and to the advancement of his salvation.

And whereas, in the other Books of Holy Writ, God represents to us how he is pleased to speak to his church; in this he teaches us how we ought to speak to him, there being no council in time of difficulty, no support in affliction, no comfort in sorrow, no praises and elevations of joy, wherewith he doth not fill the hearts and mouths of his children in the meditation of these sacred poems, which, by the efficacy of the Holy Spirit, accompanying the music and expressions of them, excite in their souls holy sallies and flights from their houses of clay, to the mansions of glory. In short, whatever hath been said of the efficacy of music, in exciting all the different passions and affections of man, assuaging grief, and appeasing anger, and all other troubles of the mind, may, in a more eminent manner, be attributed to the Divine charms of David's mystical harp.

There is no evil spirit whom this music will not drive away; no grief over which it doth not triumph. Wherefore every Christian, however eminent and prosperous his condition may be, ought to read and meditate this Book with great application, in order to accustom himself to the peculiar style and language of the Spirit of God, which is there made use of; being assured, that when he has once well relished the wonder-working efficacy and success of it, that it will be to his soul as a refreshing and reviving dew, which will make him flourishing and fruitful in all good works; and he will find

no greater pleasure than in carrying it in his heart, mouth and hands, as an assured prefer- vative, and never-failing antidote, against the malignant contagion of the world, and the general corruption that prevails throughout it. To this purpose also the the Book of Psalms is frequently recommended to us by the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, as well as by Our Saviour and his apostles in the New; and, by the special wisdom and goodness of God, it has been consigned to the church in the form of Hymns, or Songs, to make them the more taking, as well as more familiar, and thereby the more comprehensible to the meanest capacity.

The Jews have given this Book the title of *Psalms*, which signifies *Hymns*, or *Songs of Praise*; it being nothing else but a collection of Songs truly spiritual, which have been dictated by Divine inspiration, to teach us to praise and celebrate the Name of the Lord. The Greek interpreters of the Old Testament have called it by the name of a Psalter or Psalms, which title the sacred penmen of the New Testament have likewise retained; but the Greek word peculiarly denotes those holy songs which were played with the fingers on stringed instruments, according to the practice of the Israelites, in the tabernacle and temple.

These holy hymns are commonly called *The Psalms of David*, because he was the author of the greatest part of them. The rest were composed by other prophets and men of God, as Moses, Asaph, &c. and it is supposed that the whole were put together (as they now appear) by Ezra, some time after the Babylonish captivity.

The Jews have divided the Book of Psalms into five parts: the first of which ends with the 41st psalm, and is concluded with *Amen and Amen*. The second part finishes with the 72d psalm, which also ends with *Amen and Amen*, and these words, *the prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended*. The third part ends with the 89th psalm, and is likewise concluded with *Amen and Amen*: the fourth with the 106th psalm, which closes with *Amen, praise ye the Lord*: and the fifth part with the 150th and last psalm, the conclusive verse of which is, *Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.*

The PROVERBS of SOLOMON.

This Book contains a great number of most excellent sentences, penned by king Solomon, from the inspiration of the holy spirit (who had adorned him with an extraordinary wisdom as well in Divine as human matters) and which God, of his great goodness, was pleased should be preserved for the general and perpetual instruction of his church. It treats of the Divine and true wisdom; of the fear of God, and of the future felicity of man. In it we find many excellent lessons concerning our duty to God, to our neighbour, and to ourselves, in whatever state or condition we may be placed, together with considerable promises of happiness in this world (provided we conduct ourselves as we ought to do) as well as in that which is to come. The whole is intermixed with warnings against all sorts of sins contrary to the tables of the law

of God, and particularly against whoredom and adultery; so that this book may be justly accounted a fountain overflowing with saving instructions relative to all things that may tend to conduct and form us wise, religious, and well-pleasing to God, in any calling whatever, whether common or particular, public or private.

The Proverbs of Solomon, therefore, ought to be highly and carefully recommended to all Christians, as containing the most perfect and fullest moral instructions they can have, infinitely surpassing whatever the heathen philosophers, and wise men of the world, have been ever able to produce.

With respect to the collecting of all these sentences into one book, it seems that Solomon (as appears from the excellent introduction and preface comprized in the nine first chapters, which contains little else but the praises of the Divine Wisdom in general, and in particular of Our Blessed Saviour, who is the word and eternal wisdom of the Father) penned them himself as far as the 24th chapter, and that the following chapters, from thence to the 29th, were collected and transcribed by the command of the good king Hezekiah, either out of Solomon's own memoirs, or those of some other person inspired with the holy spirit. The 30th chapter contains the words of Agur; and the last chapter consists of instructions given to Solomon by his mother, which he not only received and approved of, but also thought fit to transmit to the church of God, for the instruction of mankind in general.

Though this Book does not contain all the 3000 proverbs written by Solomon (as mentioned in 1 Kings iv. 32.) yet it has the sum and substance of them, and contains all that God was pleased should be consigned to the use and perpetual edification of the church throughout all ages.

The BOOK of ECCLESIASTES.

It is the general opinion of the learned that Solomon wrote this book towards the close of his life, after he had repented of his apostacy from the true worship of God, to that of idols. In it he declares, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and before the whole church of God, the great sorrow and regret he had conceived for his life, most earnestly detesting it as mere vanity and vexation of spirit, incapable of affording any true peace, or solid content of mind, much less of leading him to the enjoyment of eternal salvation.

The chief aim and design of Solomon in forming this composition is, to conduct all others, by his example, to pursue such steps as may lead them to godliness and virtue, and not to place too much expectation on the pleasures of this world. To this purpose he first gives a description of the whole course of his life, and particularly of that part of it whereon he had strictly founded the greatest expectations of happiness. He then tells us that he had been a great observer of the lives and conversation of men, and had examined the principal things on which they had founded their chief pleasures and enjoyment, but that he had found them all to be

vanity, and what only engaged men in prophaneness, and various kinds of sins. Furthermore, he declares, and positively asserts, that the world, its good things, pleasures, accidents, vicissitudes, orders and customs, being all vicious, or at least corrupt and tainted by the vanity sin has introduced into it; that because all things in it are short in their continuance, uncertain in their conduct, unequal in their tenor, and devoid of any durable felicity, a wise man must not place his hopes in them, or fix his heart upon them, so as passionately to desire the good things in it, or think to amend or avoid all its disorders and evils. On the contrary, that every man ought moderately to rejoice himself, without vexation or covetousness, but yet with care and diligence in his lawful calling, in the short and temporary enjoyment of the blessings he hath received from the liberal hand of God, conforming his motions of joy or sorrow according to the variety of accidents that happen in this life by the dispensation of the all-wise Providence of God, who governs and disposeth all things in this world as best pleaseth him; and that they are not at all subject to the uncertainty and hazard of chance, as some may falsely imagine. He concludes with exhorting all men to give up and resign themselves to God, by fearing him sincerely, obeying him faithfully, and by constantly applying themselves to all manner of good works; setting continually before their eyes (especially while they are young and healthy) the precariousness of this life, the unavoidable certainty of death, the terror of the just judgment of God, and the joys of eternity. So that this Book may, with great propriety, be called, *The Treasure of Maxims and Instructions concerning the true felicity, and chief good of mankind in general.*

This Book is called in Hebrew *Kobeleth*, and in Greek, *Ecclesiastes*. The word *Kobeleth* comes from the root *Kakal*, which signifies, *to assemble*; so that the word implies, a person who calls or gathers others together on any particular occasion. Indeed, all men are, in their own nature, as poor sheep that are wandering and lost; but God sends his servants as so many shepherds to assemble and call them together from their strays. There are some who imagine the word *Kobeleth* to have been one of the names given to Solomon, who was also called Jediah and Lemuel; and what inclines them to this opinion is, because the word, though it be of a feminine termination, is nevertheless joined to a masculine verb, *Amar Kobeleth*. The Greek word *Ecclesiastes* properly signifies a *preacher*; but this is not to be understood as if Solomon had publicly preached before the people, but because in this book he sets forth an excellent sermon, or homily, full of the most edifying instructions and exhortations. Others again understand by the word *Ecclesiastes*, one who, by a public discourse in the church, openly confesses the sins he hath committed, and testifies his sincere repentance, which undoubtedly was the custom of the Primitive Church.

The SONG of SOLOMON.

This Book is so called from its having been

written by Solomon, who indited it from Divine inspiration. It is called, by way of excellence, the *Song of Songs*; because it is the highest and divinest strain of all the compositions made by that wise king, and is a kind of epithalamium, or nuptial poem, made on the spiritual marriage which Christ has been pleased to contract with his church. It is made in the form of a dialogue between Christ as the bridegroom, and the Church as his spouse, under the type, or at least on occasion of the marriage consummated between king Solomon, and the daughter of Pharaoh king of Egypt; as was also the 45th psalm; and accordingly we sometimes find the friends and bridemen of the Bridegroom, as well as the bridemaids and companions of the Bride, brought in as interlocutors in this holy and mystical poem.

By the friends of the Bridegroom we may understand the good and holy prophets of the Old Testament, the Apostles of the New, and all faithful pastors and teachers of the church in general; and by the Bride's Companions we may understand all those who sincerely confess the name of Christ, and profess his true doctrine. Under the names of Bridegroom and Bride is here represented, in figured and allegorical expressions, the great and ardent love of Christ towards his Spouse, which is the Church, the great benefits she receives from him, and how vehemently the Spouse, the Holy Church, doth languish and pant after her dearest Bridegroom, till she be indissolubly and eternally united to him in heaven. In this Book is also represented the condition and constitution of the church of God upon earth, her duties, virtues, blemishes and defects.

The Jewish Rabbis would not permit any person, who had not attained the age of thirty years, to read the three first chapters of Genesis, the beginning and end of Ezekiel, or this Song of Solomon: and though, perhaps, there might have been too much superstition in this their prohibition, yet it is not without cause that we are carefully warned by the Antient Doctors, as well of the Synagogue as of the Church, that a man must lay aside all sensual thoughts, and carnal affections, when he applies himself to the reading and meditating on this Book; and that he who would wish to understand the deep mysteries therein contained to his edification and comfort, must come to it with a mature, settled, and enlightened judgment, and with spiritual thoughts and holy affections. For though the expressions here made use of are calculated to contract and cement chaste and holy marriages here on earth, and thereby serve to recommend the same; yet, because the Holy Spirit is pleased to represent to us (under these notions) such transcendent and adorable mysteries, we must have an especial care not to profane or defile them by a carnal and corrupt interpretation.

He, therefore, who is earnestly desirous of edifying and profiting himself by this very excellent and Divine poem, must read it with great attention, and with a heart pure and undefiled; in which case he will not fail to meet with such illuminating instructions and surpassing comforts as will secure to him happiness here, and eternal felicity hereafter.

C H A P. X.

Darius Nothus succeeds Akasuerus on the throne of Persia, but, dying soon, is succeeded by his son Arsaces. Cyrus, the younger brother of Arsaces, attempts to obtain the sovereignty, and for that purpose raises a very considerable army, but is defeated by Arsaces and himself slain. Johanan, the high-priest among the Jews, kills his brother Joshua in the temple, for which he is fined, and a tax levied upon the Jews on the occasion. Arsaces dies, and is succeeded on the throne of Persia by his son Ochus, who is poisoned by an Egyptian eunuch called Bagoas. He likewise poisons the son of Ochus, and places another of the same name on the throne, whom he intends destroying in like manner, but the king, discovering his design, obliges him to drink it himself, which puts a period to his life. Ochus assumes the name of Darius Codomannus, in whose reign a circumstance occurs very prejudicial to the Jews. Darius is defeated by Alexander, king of Macedon, commonly called Alexander the Great, and his mother, wife and children, made prisoners. Alexander lays siege to Tyre, and takes it by storm. He marches against Jerusalem, but is prevented from attacking it by means of Jaddua the high-priest, to whom he pays reverence, and worships the name of the Lord. Darius is assassinated by one of his generals named Bessus, which circumstance occasions a dissolution of the Persian monarchy. He dies, and the Grecian empire is divided among several of his generals, one of whom, named Ptolemy, takes Jerusalem by stratagem, and making the Jews captives, carries great numbers of them into Egypt, and other parts. He treats them with distinguished kindness, as does also his successor Ptolemy Philadelphus, who not only gives them their liberty, but likewise many rich presents for the use of the temple. Ptolemy Philadelphus dies, and is succeeded by his son Euergetes. Onias, the high-priest, refuses to pay the annual tribute to Euergetes, who sends an ambassador to him with threats, in case he continues to refuse the payment. Onias remains obstinate, but, by the prudent management of his nephew Joseph, the king's rage is appeased, and the threatened consequences happily subverted. Ptolemy Philopater succeeds his father Euergetes, but soon dying with intemperance, is succeeded by his son Ptolemy Epiphanes. The Jews submit themselves to Antiochus, king of Asia, who grants them many singular privileges. The perfidy and death of Hyrcanus.

THE Almighty having been pleased to withdraw his prophets in the deaths of Nehemiah and Malachi, the Jews were left to govern themselves according to their own laws. This they did for some time, enjoying their religion without any interruption, and having high-priests, as their leaders; but they remained subject to the dominion of the Persians so long as that empire subsisted.

Artaxerxes (called in Scripture Ahasuerus) who sat on the Persian throne in the time of Nehemiah and Malachi, died in the 49th year of his reign, greatly lamented by his subjects. His sons, who were numerous, disputed each their title to the throne, till at length Ochus, or Darius (commonly called Darius Nothus) prevailed, and was chosen king by the general approbation of the people. This prince, however, dying in a very short time after his accession, was succeeded by his son Arsaces, who ruled the whole empire of Persia, except lesser Asia, which was bequeathed by Darius to a younger son named Cyrus. Arsaces was born before his father was king, but his brother Cyrus after; for which reason the younger prince imagined he had the greater right to the government of the whole empire. To support his claims, he raised a numerous army of Persians in his government of Lesser Asia, and having procured the as-

sistance of a body of auxiliary Grecians, he began his march to dispossess his brother of the crown. Arsaces met him with an army of 100,000 Persians, at the distance of about seventy miles from Babylon, when a desperate battle took place, which terminated in favour of Arsaces, the army of Cyrus being defeated and himself slain. The Grecian auxiliaries, however, made an admirable retreat, under the conduct of their able and learned general Xenophon, whose narrative of that singular transaction is one of the finest pieces of antient history with which the moderns are acquainted.

Arsaces, towards the latter end of his reign, made Bagoas, the chief commander of his forces, governor of Syria and Phœnicia, to the rulers of which the Jews had been subject ever since the death of Nehemiah, the last governor the kings of Persia sent to Jerusalem. At this time Johanan, the grandson of Eliashib, was high-priest, which office he had held with great reputation for several years. Bagoas, having a peculiar respect for Joshua, the brother of Johanan, resolved to remove the latter and place the former in his stead. He therefore invested him with sufficient authority for the purpose, upon which Joshua went to Jerusalem in order to take possession of the office. On his arrival there he attempted by force to get into the temple,

ple, which Johanan used his utmost endeavours to prevent. In the course of the scuffle it so happened that Johanan, having a superiority of strength, overpowered Joshua, and, in the height of his passion, slew him in the inner court of the temple. As soon as Bagoas heard of this, he immediately repaired to Jerusalem, and having taken a thorough cognizance of the fact, imposed a mulct on Johanan for the offence; besides which he obliged the priests to pay out of the public treasury the sum of fifty drachms for every lamb they should afterwards offer in their daily sacrifices*. Johanan held the priestly office till his death, and was succeeded by his son Jaddus.

On the death of Arfaces, his son Ochus, a very valiant and enterprising youth, succeeded to the throne of Persia. This prince subdued the Egyptians and Phœnicians who had revolted, destroyed all the fortified places, and carried away many of the people into captivity. Among these was an Egyptian eunuch named Bagoas, of whom Ochus grew so exceedingly fond that he heaped innumerable favours on him. The treacherous Bagoas, however, formed a conspiracy against the life of his benefactor, and at length effected his purpose by poisoning him in the 23d year of his reign. Not content with this, he, in a very short time after, poisoned his son Ochus, who succeeded him, and contrived to place another Ochus on the throne, who, it is imagined, was not in the least related to the royal family. It was not long, however, before he was displeased with this monarch also, and, as usual, had prepared a cup of poison for him; but the king discovered his intentions, and obliged him to drink it himself. Thus was his repeated treachery punished, and the law of retaliation properly exercised.

Ochus, having thus removed the base and treacherous Bagoas, and being thoroughly established on the throne of Persia, took upon himself the name of Darius Codomannus, which he retained during the remainder of his life.

Some time after Darius Codomannus had been seated on the Persian throne, an accident happened which put the Jewish state into great disorder and confusion, and had liked to have proved fatal to it. Manasseh, brother to Jaddus the high-priest, and colleague with him, having married Nicasa, the daughter of Sanballat, (the

old enemy of the Jews) the elders of Jerusalem, wisely foreseeing the fatal consequence of such marriages, and reflecting that they had been, in a great measure, the cause of their late captivity, and other judgments sent among them, demanded of Manasseh that he should either dismiss his wife, or never more approach the altar. His brother the high-priest concurred in this demand, and in conjunction with the elders, insisted on it he should no longer officiate as a priest unless he complied with their request.

In consequence of this Manasseh repaired to his father-in-law Sanballat, who was chief ruler of the Samaritans†, and who constantly resided at Samaria, the capital of the country. Manasseh told Sanballat all that had passed at Jerusalem, and declared, that though he passionately loved his daughter, yet he was unwilling, for her sake, to be deprived of the priesthood, which was a native honour, and in the highest esteem among the Jews. Sanballat, in order to ease the mind of his son-in-law on this head, told him that if he would but continue his affection to his daughter, and keep her as his wife, he would not only secure him in his then station, but would raise him to the rank of high-priest, establish him as a prince of the country, and build him a temple on Mount Gerezim equal to that at Jerusalem; all which should be performed by the power and permission of Darius. Manasseh, relying on these promises, remained with his father-in-law, the consequence of which was, that many of the priests, as well as common people at Jerusalem, who had engaged in these forbidden marriages, resorted to Samaria, and placed themselves under his protection. Their removal, indeed, was far from being against their interest, for Sanballat, to encourage his ambitious son-in-law, furnished them with houses, lands, stock and money, which afterwards occasioned great mutiny and disorder in the Jewish state.

About this time the territories of Darius Codomannus were invaded by the Grecians under the command of Philip, king of Macedon, who was chosen generalissimo of the confederate armies of Greece; but being treacherously murdered by Pausanias, one of his principal officers, he was succeeded by his son Alexander, afterwards known by the name of Alexander the Great. This prince, though but twenty years

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* The payment of this tax lasted no longer than seven years; for on the death of Arfaces, the changes and revolutions, which then happened in the empire, made a change in the government of Syria, and the person who succeeded Bagoas in that province, no farther exacted it.

† The Samaritans were originally the Cutheans, and such others of the eastern nations, as Esarhaddon, king of Babylon, had planted there, after reducing the Israelites, and carrying them away captives. When the temple was built on Mount Gerezim, at the instigation of Sanballat, Samaria became a common refuge for all refractory Jews, and this mixture of inhabitants produced, in a short time, a change in religion. The Samaritans had, for a long time, worshipped the God of Israel in conjunction with the idols of the east from whence they came; but when once the Jewish worship came to be settled among them, and the Book of the Law of Moses to be read publicly, they conformed themselves wholly to the worship of the true God, and, in their performance of this, were as exact as the Jews themselves.

The Jews, however, looking on them as apostates, hated them to such a degree as to avoid all manner of converse and connection with them. This hatred first began from the malice which the Samaritans expressed against the Jews both in the rebuilding of their temple, and in the reparation of the walls of their city under the management of the good Nehemiah. It was afterwards greatly increased by the apostacy of Manasseh, in his setting up an altar and temple in opposition to those at Jerusalem; and it was all along kept up on account of some particular tokens, wherein the two nations materially disagreed. The Samaritans received no other Scriptures than the five books of Moses; they rejected all traditions, adhered only to the written word itself, and maintained that Mount Gerezim, on which their temple was built, was the only proper place for the worship of God; and from this variety of causes ensued all the hatred and virulence which afterwards took place between the Jews and Samaritans, the particulars of which will appear in the course of our history.

of age, took the command of the Grecian army, and passing the Hellespont at the head of 30,000 foot, and 5000 horse, engaged the Persians on the banks of the Granicus, and, notwithstanding they were greatly superior in number, obtained a compleat victory.

As soon as Darius heard of the defeat of his army by Alexander he immediately assembled his forces, fully resolved to give the Macedonians battle, and, if possible, prevent them from committing any farther ravages in his territories. He accordingly marched at the head of his troops beyond the Euphrates, and encamped on the side of Mount Taurus in Cilicia. This was agreeable news to Sanballat, who assured his son-in-law Manasseh that on the king's return he would ratify all he had promised, having no doubt but Darius would obtain a compleat conquest over the Macedonians. In this, however, he happened to be mistaken, for though Alexander's army was very inferior in number to that of the Persians, the latter were totally routed, Darius's mother, wife and children taken prisoners, and he obliged to save himself by a precipitate flight.

Alexander, encouraged by this success, marched directly into Syria, took Damascus and Sidon, and laid siege to Tyre. From hence he wrote letters to Jaddus the high priest at Jerusalem, desiring the assistance he had heretofore given to Darius, and demanding that he would supply his army with necessaries, which should be punctually paid for. The high-priest returned for answer, that he had sworn not to take up arms against Darius, and that he would keep his oath inviolable as long as he lived. This answer enraged Alexander, who vowed revenge against the high-priest as soon as he should have reduced the place he was then besieging.

When Sanballat understood that Alexander lay before Tyre, he immediately revolted from Darius, and went over to him with eight thousand men he had assembled together out of his own province. Alexander received him with great respect, and bade him speak his mind to him without the least restraint, as he would be ready to grant any reasonable request he might ask. This gave Sanballat a favourable opportunity of executing the design he had projected. He told him he had a son-in-law named Manasseh, who was brother to Jaddus the high-priest of the Jews; and that he was following him with a great concourse of people, in order to ask his permission to erect a temple in that province for the performance of Divine worship. He intimated at the same time how much Alexander's interest was concerned in this permission, as the Jews, who were very numerous, might, if refused, be as troublesome to him as they had heretofore been to the Syrians. Alexander readily granted Sanballat's request, upon which he gave orders for the immediate erecting of the temple on Mount Gerezim, appointed his son-in-law to be high-priest, and ordered that his descendants by his daughter should succeed to that honour.

In the mean time Alexander carried on the siege of Tyre, and after the expiration of seven months took it by storm. The temple which he had given Sanballat permission to build was now

compleated, and Manasseh was appointed high-priest, but his father-in-law did not live long to see him enjoy that honour, for, in about two months after, he paid the debt of nature.

As soon as Alexander had made a conquest of Tyre he marched at the head of his victorious army towards Jerusalem, fully resolved to punish the high priest for disobeying his commands. Jaddus being apprized of Alexander's intentions, and that he was marching with all haste to Jerusalem, was greatly alarmed, and knowing how incapable he was to make any resistance against so powerful an invader, ordered prayers and sacrifices to be offered up for the general prosperity and safety of the people. On the following night it was revealed to Jaddus in a dream, that he should adorn the city with garlands and flowers, open the gates, and let the people, who should be dressed in white, go out to meet Alexander, himself and the other priests preceding in their proper habits.

When Jaddus awoke he was so highly pleased with what had been revealed to him in his dream, that having in the morning told the citizens what had passed, he proceeded to make the necessary preparations for meeting the king. As soon as he understood that Alexander was near at hand, he, with the priests and people, left the city, and went to a place called Sapha, that is, *the place of prospect*, from its being so elevated as to command an uninterrupted view of the city and temple. The army of Alexander made no doubt of soon obtaining a conquest, and flattered themselves with reaping great advantages by plundering the city; but in this they soon found themselves mistaken, things taking a very different turn from what they expected. As soon as Alexander saw the people walking in white, the priests in silk robes, and the high-priest in purple embroidered with gold, wearing his mitre, and having on his forehead a golden plate with the name of God on it, he advanced alone, paid homage to the inscription by falling on his knees, and complimented the high-priest. So unexpected a circumstance greatly surprized the Jews, who gathered in crowds, and proclaimed the praise of Alexander. The princes and great men of Persia were likewise astonished at the behaviour of Alexander on this occasion, one of whom, named Parmenio, asked him how it happened that he, whom almost every man worshipped, should pay such adoration to a priest of the Jews? The reply that Alexander made to this was, "That he did not pay that adoration to him, but to the God whose high-priest he was: that while he was at Dion in Macedonia, and deliberating with himself in what manner he should carry on the war with Persia, that very person, and in that very habit, appeared to him in a dream, encouraging him to pass boldly over into Asia, and not to doubt of success, because God would be his guide in the expedition, and give him the empire of the Persians; and therefore he was assured from hence, that he made the then war under the direction of that God, to whom, in the person of the high-priest, he paid adoration." Having said this he very kindly embraced Jaddus, and the other priests escorting him into the city, he went into the temple, and there offered up

sacrifices to God. At the conclusion of this ceremony Jaddus shewed him a prophecy of Daniel, which predicted the overthrow of the Persian empire by a Grecian king. This Alexander applied to himself, and was firmly convinced in his own mind that he was the person whom God had appointed for so great a work. Pleased with this reflection, he offered to grant the people whatever immunities the high-priest should desire; upon which Jaddus told him, that they wished only to enjoy their own laws, and to possess the same privileges as their brethren did in Media and Babylon; that, according to the Mosaic law, they neither sowed nor plowed every seventh year, and therefore they should esteem it a very high favour if he would be pleased to remit the tribute of that year. Alexander readily complied with this request; and having confirmed the Jews in the enjoyment of all their privileges, particularly that of living under, and according to their own laws, he took a friendly leave of the high-priest, and departed.

Alexander, having left the city of Jerusalem, visited several other places in its neighbourhood, at all of which he was received by the people with great testimonies of friendship and submission. The Samaritans who dwelt at Sichem, at the foot of Mount Gerezim, and were apostates from the Jewish religion, hearing how kindly Alexander had treated the people of Jerusalem, resolved to take advantage of it by telling him that they were Jews likewise. It was a common practice with them to assert this, or deny it, as best suited their interest or convenience. When at any time they observed the affairs of the Jews in a prosperous condition, they boasted that they were of their nation, and descended from Manasseh and Ephraim; but when they thought it was their interest to say the contrary, they would not fail to affirm, and even swear, that they had not the least relation to them. Resolved however, to claim affinity on the present occasion, in order to answer their intended purposes, they went with great eagerness as far as the territories of Jerusalem to meet Alexander, whom they no sooner saw than they expressed their satisfaction by the loudest acclamations. Alexander commended their zeal, upon which the Samaritans (or Sichemites) humbly intreated him to visit their temple, and honour their city with his presence. The king told them that he was then hastening to Egypt, but that when he returned, if his affairs would permit, he would not fail to comply with their desires. They then requested that he would grant them an exemption from all taxes in every seventh year, because they, as well as the Jews, neither tilled nor reaped that year. Alexander then asked them if they were Jews, upon which they told him they were Hebrews, and that the Phœnicians called them Sichemites. The king then dismissed them with this answer: "The favour you ask I have granted to the Jews; and when I return, and am better informed, I shall indulge you in whatever may be thought reasonable."

Alexander, having conquered Egypt, regulated all things there to his satisfaction, and given orders for building the city of Alexandria,

departed thence about spring, to go with the utmost expedition into the east in pursuit of Darius. In his way through Palestine he was informed that the Samaritans, in a general insurrection, had killed Andromachus, the governor of Syria and Palestine, who going to Samaria to settle some affairs of a public nature, the inhabitants set fire to the house, and he perished in the flames. This base action greatly incensed Alexander against the Samaritans, because he had a particular regard for Andromachus. He therefore ordered all those to be executed who were any ways concerned in the murder: the rest he banished from Samaria, and settled a colony of Macedonians in their stead. The remaining part of their lands he gave to the Jews, and exempted them from the payment of the seventh year's tribute. Those who were banished from Samaria retired to Sichem at the foot of Mount Gerezim, which thereby became the capital of the Samaritans; and, lest eight thousand men of their nation (who had been brought over to him by Sanballat, and had accompanied him ever since the siege of Tyre) should, if sent back into their own country, renew the spirit of rebellion therein, he sent them into Thebais, the most remote province of Egypt, and there assigned them lands for the support of themselves and families.

Alexander, having penetrated into Palestine, passed the Euphrates and Tigris, and in the plains of Arbela again gave the Persians a total defeat; the consequence of which was, that Babylon, Susa and Persepolis opened their gates to the conqueror. The last of these cities, which was then the first in the universe, he ordered to be burnt, merely to please a Grecian courtesan, named Thais.

After this third defeat Darius fled towards Media, in hopes of raising such a force in this and the northern provinces of the empire, which still acknowledged subjection to him, as might enable him once more to try his fortune. He accordingly proceeded as far as Ecbatane, the capital of Media, where he gathered together the broken remains of his army, to which he added some new levies, and with these flattered himself with being able once more to engage the conqueror.

In the mean time Alexander, having spent the winter at Babylon and Persepolis, took the field to go in search of Darius, who, on receiving notice of his march, left Ecbatane, with a design of retreating into Bactria, there to fortify himself, and make some addition to his forces; but he soon changed his mind, stopped short, and determined once more to hazard a battle, though his army at that time consisted only of forty thousand men.

While Darius was employed in making the necessary preparations for giving battle to Alexander, a scheme was concerted between Bessus the governor of Bactria, and Nabazanes, another great man of Persia, for taking away his life. These two, having suddenly seized the king, loaded him with chains, put him into a covered chariot, and fled towards Bactria, taking him with them. Their design was, if Alexander pursued them, to purchase their own security by delivering

delivering Darius up to his enemy; if not, to kill him, take possession of the kingdom, and renew the war.

On the eighth day after their departure Alexander arrived at Ecbatane, and hearing what the traitors had done to Darius, he made all the haste he could to rescue the unfortunate king out of their hands. After several days march he at length came up with them, and the conspirators finding themselves closely pressed did what they could to compel Darius to get on horseback, and save himself with them; but he refusing to comply, they stabbed him in several places, and left him expiring in the chariot. He was quite dead when Alexander came up, who, when he saw his corpse, could not forbear shedding tears at so melancholy a spectacle. Having thrown his cloak over the body, he ordered it to be wrapped therein, and conveyed to his wife Sisygambis at Shushan, that he might have a royal interment, and be buried in the sepulchres of the kings of Persia.

Thus died Darius Codomannus, after having possessed the throne of Persia only six years. And thus (according to the prophecies of Daniel) was an end put to the Persian monarchy, after it had subsisted for the space of 208 years.

Alexander, having obtained an entire conquest over the Persian empire, carried his arms into India, where he subdued one Porus, a very powerful monarch of that country; and, indeed, so successful was he in all his enterprizes, that he made himself master of the greatest part of the then known world. He afterwards married Statira, the eldest daughter of the unfortunate Darius and obliged his officers to intermarry with Persian ladies. Returning to Babylon, elated by vanity, and intoxicated with success, he gave himself up to all manner of debaucheries, and at length fell a martyr to excessive drinking * in the year of the world 3681, in the 33d year of his age, and 12th of his reign †.

On the death of Alexander the Grecian or Macedonian empire (for so the whole was called which Alexander had conquered) was divided among the chief commanders of his army, he not having, previous to his death, appointed any person in particular to succeed him in the sovereignty. These respective people, not satisfied with their different allotments, continued at war with each other for some years, in the

course of which great numbers of people were sacrificed, and many capital cities utterly destroyed. At length the number of these governors or princes were reduced to four, who unanimously agreed to make a partition of the whole among themselves, and to divide it into four kingdoms.

In this division Antiochus took the sovereignty of Asia; Seleucus that of Babylon and the bordering countries; Cassander reigned over Macedonia; and Ptolemy, the son of Lagus, king of Egypt, succeeded to the sovereignty of his father's dominions.

Ptolemy had not long taken possession of Egypt, before he became restless, and was anxious for making some additions to his territories. He was desirous of making himself master of the provinces of Syria, Phœnicia and Judea, thinking they would be an excellent barrier to his dominions. The first step he took towards effecting this was, to attempt to bribe Laomedon, one of the late Alexander's captains (who, it is probable, was made governor of Syria and the adjacent countries after the death of Andromachus) with a prodigious sum of money if he would quietly deliver them into his hands. Laomedon rejected this offer with disdain, upon which Ptolemy sent Nicanor, one of his captains, with an army into Syria, while himself invaded Phœnicia; and having vanquished Leomedon, and taken him prisoner, he soon accomplished his wishes, by making himself master of the provinces of Syria, Phœnicia and Judea.

Not only the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but likewise all the Jews throughout Judea, stood out against Ptolemy, and, on account of the oath they had taken to Leomedon, refused to submit to his authority. In consequence of this Ptolemy marched with a considerable army into Judea, and having got possession of the principal places in the country, at length laid siege to Jerusalem. The city being strongly fortified the inhabitants held out for some time, and might have rendered all the efforts of Ptolemy abortive, had it not been for their observance of the sabbath, which, at this time, they kept so strict, that they thought it a breach of their law even to defend themselves on that day. As soon as Ptolemy understood this he took advantage of it by storming the place on the very next sabbath, and in the assault took it, there not being any of the people who would defend the walls against him.

* The particular circumstances which occasioned the death of this prince are thus related: One day, after he had been offering up sacrifices for the many victories he had obtained, he made an entertainment for his friends, at which he drank very hard, and continued the debauch till late at night when he and his company were invited, by a physician of Thessalia, to go with him, and drink a little more at his house. Alexander accepted the offer, and as there were twenty in company, he first drank to each of them in their order, and then called for the Herculean cup, which is said to have been so large as to contain six quarts. This vessel being filled the king drank to one of the company named Prodeas, a Macedonian, and having emptied it, he some time after pledged him again in the same, drinking the like quantity; but immediately after the second cup, he dropped from his seat, and then fell into a violent fever, of which he soon died, after a reign of twelve years, six of which he governed as king of Macedonia, and six as monarch of Asia.

† We are told by Diodorus Siculus that Aridæus, the brother of Alexander, was charged with the care of carrying his body from Babylon to Alexandria, and that he employed two years in making preparations for the removal of it, during which time a great contention arose with respect to the place to which it should be carried for interment. There had been a prophecy current intimating that the place where Alexander should be buried would flourish and become very prosperous: the governors, therefore, of the cities and provinces disputed with each other who should have the honour and advantage of disposing of the body. A proposal was made for its being carried to Aigui in Macedonia, where generally the kings of that country were buried; but this was overruled by the Egyptians. His body was, therefore, first deposited at Memphis, but afterwards removed to Alexandria. It is said to have been laid in a coffin made of solid gold, and that it was embalmed in honey.

him. Having possessed himself of the place, and put a proper garrison in it, he took an hundred thousand of the Jews captives with him into Egypt. At first he treated them with some severity, but reflecting on the fidelity they had shewn to their former governors, he employed them in his army and garrisons, and granted them the same privilege in Alexandria which were enjoyed by the Macedonians; whereupon the whole nation of the Jews became subject to the power and dominion of the kings of Egypt.

About this time Onias, the high-priest of Jerusalem, died, and was succeeded by his son Simon, who, from his great piety and holiness of life, was distinguished by the title of *Simon the Just*. He continued in the priestly office only nine years, and was succeeded by his brother Eleazar, his son Onias being at that time only a minor.

On the death of Ptolemy, king of Egypt, his son Ptolemy Philadelphus succeeded to the throne. He was a man naturally of a very tender and humane disposition, as also a very great encourager of learning. His father had erected a Museum, or College for learned men, in the city of Alexandria, in which was a library that contained no less than 400,000 volumes, and Ptolemy Philadelphus had no sooner succeeded to the throne than he resolved to make all the improvements he could to what his father had begun. To this purpose, hearing that the Jews had among them a famous book, called *the Book of their Law*, he thought it well deserved a place in his collection. He therefore wrote to Eleazar the high-priest, requesting him to obtain an authentic copy of it, and because it was written in a language he did not understand, he desired him to obtain a competent number of learned men to translate it from the Hebrew tongue into that of the Greek. Eleazar strictly complied with the king's commands, and from the joint labours of the LXX, or rather LXXII translators, (for the king's orders were that he should chuse six of the most learned out of each tribe) the work was soon compleated, and that version has ever since been distinguished by the name of the *Septuagint*.

Ptolemy, having got this business executed, next directed his attention towards the captive Jews. He issued out a proclamation, ordering all those who had been made prisoners during his father's reign, as well as those who had fallen into captivity before, and subsequent to that period, to be immediately set at liberty. He likewise ordered them to be furnished, at his own expence, with all kinds of necessaries for their journey to Jerusalem, and, at their departure, gave them many valuable presents for the use of the temple.

Ptolemy Philadelphus, after reigning over Egypt thirty-eight years, paid the debt of nature in the sixty-third year of his age, and was succeeded by his son Euergetes.

About this time also died Eleazar the high-priest, who was succeeded by his nephew Onias, son to Simon the Just. He was, in many respects, quite the reverse of his father, and of so mean and covetous a disposition that he refused

the usual tribute of twenty talents which his predecessors had annually paid to the kings of Egypt. Ptolemy Euergetes was so irritated at the conduct of Onias, that he sent one Athenion, an officer of his court, to Jerusalem, to demand the full payment of the money, threatening, in case of refusal, to send an army into Judea, and dispossess them of their country.

The Jews were exceeding terrified when they heard of this message; but Onias, whose ruling passion was the love of money, took no notice of it, being fully resolved to abide the consequences. These would certainly, on this occasion, have been very fatal to the Jews, had it not been for the timely interposition of Onias's nephew named Joseph, a young man of very great reputation, and particularly distinguished for his prudence, justice and sanctity of life.

As soon as Joseph heard of the message sent to his uncle by Euergetes, and of the people's great consternation in consequence thereof, he immediately repaired to Onias, and severely upbraided him with his disregard to the welfare of the public, to whom he owed his promotion. He told him that, for the sake of a little money, he had exposed the whole nation to the most imminent danger, and that, unless he went to the Egyptians, and by a timely application to the king, endeavoured to appease his wrath, the most dreadful consequences would certainly ensue.

Onias peremptorily refused following the directions of his nephew, upon which Joseph offered, with his permission, to go in his stead. This being granted, he immediately assembled the people in the temple, telling them he would wait on the king, and that he hoped his uncle's remissness would not be productive of any ill consequence. The people, who had a universal respect for Joseph, were highly pleased at this intelligence, and earnestly besought him to set about the business. In consequence of this Joseph invited Athenion, the king's commissioner, to his house, where he entertained him in the most splendid manner for several days, and at his departure presented him with many valuable gifts, telling him, he would follow in a very short time, and that he would give his master full satisfaction with respect to the business on which he had sent him.

The graceful manner and deportment of Joseph so wrought upon Athenion, that when he came to give the king a report of his embassy he mentioned his name with the highest respect; and when he told Euergetes of his intentions to come and wait upon him himself, he set forth his character with so much advantage, that the king anxiously expressed his desire to see him.

In the mean time Joseph sent to his friends in Samaria, telling them the business on which he was going, and requesting them to assist him with money that he might be enabled to purchase equipages, horses, carriages, plate, &c. necessary for the journey. This being readily complied with, and all things ready, Joseph set out for Alexandria, where the Egyptian court was at that time kept. On his way he fell in with some of the princes and nobles of Syria and Phœnicia, who were going to the king to purchase his revenue, which was annually sold to the

the best bidder. With these Joseph joined company, and having learned, from their discourse, of what value the revenues were, he made use of that intelligence afterwards both to his own and the king's advantage.

When Joseph arrived at Alexandria he found the king was gone to Memphis. He therefore immediately set out for that place, in the way to which he had the good fortune to meet the king, the queen and Athenion all in the same chariot returning to Alexandria. As soon as Athenion saw Joseph, he told the king that was the young man of whom he had so highly spoken; upon which Euergetes took him into his carriage, and mentioned how ill he had been treated by Onias the high-priest. Joseph replied, "An old man is a second time a child: impute nothing to Onias beyond what his age will excuse; for us who have youth, and the power of our faculties, we will give proof of our dutiful attachment." The king was so pleased with this answer, and conceived so high an opinion of Joseph, that, on their arrival at Alexandria, he gave orders that he should be lodged in the palace, and that he should be every day entertained at his table.

The day being come for farming out the revenues to the best bidder, the Syrian and Phœnician noblemen, whom Joseph had accompanied in his way to Alexandria, endeavoured to undervalue them, offering no more than eight thousand talents for all the duties of Cœlo-Syria, Phœnicia, Judea and Samaria. Joseph, having learnt from the conversation that passed between him and the nobles while on their journey the real value of the revenues, boldly offered double the sum. This highly pleased the king, who asked him what security he could give. Joseph told him his securities were undoubted; upon which the king ordered him to name them. Joseph replied, he had no doubt but that his majesty and the queen would be mutually bound for his security. The king, from the high opinion he entertained of Joseph, immediately admitted him as receiver-general of all those provinces, a circumstance which greatly mortified those whose intentions were to have purchased the farming of the revenues at an undervalue.

The first step Joseph took after being appointed to this high office was, to satisfy the king for his uncle's arrears, which he did by borrowing five hundred talents of some of the principal people in Alexandria. Having adjusted this matter, he requested of the king that he might have a guard of two thousand men to support him in the collection of the duties, which being granted, he left Alexandria, and proceeded towards Syria to execute his office. On his arrival at a place called Ascalon, the people not only refused to pay the tribute, but highly insulted him; whereupon he punished twenty of the ringleaders, and raised a thousand talents from their forfeited estates, which he sent to the king, with an account of his proceedings. This so pleased the king that he left him wholly to his own conduct; and the rest of the Syrians, terrified by the example of their brethren, paid their taxes without the least hesitation.

In this situation did Joseph continue for the

space of twenty-two years, when the respective provinces that paid tribute to the kings of Egypt being taken by Antiochus the Great, king of Asia, he was removed from his office, though, from the revolutions that afterwards occurred, he was reinstated.

On the death of Ptolemy Euergetes, his son Philopater (not without some suspicion of having poisoned his father) ascended to the throne of Egypt. He was a man entirely given up to his lusts and voluptuous delights, drinking, gaming, and lasciviousness being the whole employment of his life. By his intemperance and debaucheries he soon wore out a strong constitution, and died unlamented by his subjects, leaving the crown to his son Ptolemy Epiphanes.

As soon as Antiochus the Great heard of the death of Philopater king of Egypt, he resolved to take advantage of the young king's inability to oppose him, and marching with an army into Cœlo-Syria and Palestine, soon made himself master of those provinces. The Egyptians, however, under the command of Scapas their general, endeavoured to regain them, and had actually got Jerusalem into their possession; but on the approach of Antiochus in person the Jews, (having been but ill treated by Scapas, who was of a very avaricious and tyrannical disposition) cheerfully submitted to him, and his army having entered the city they assisted him in reducing the citadel, in which a strong garrison had been left by Scapas. In acknowledgment for these services, Antiochus, by a public edict, granted the Jews many singular privileges which had been denied them by the kings of Egypt, and in particular that of living according to the antient laws and religion of their country.

Some time after this the Romans, who were professed enemies to Antiochus, having become exceeding formidable, he was desirous of having his armies at liberty to oppose them. To effect this he made a peace with Ptolemy Epiphanes, and giving him his daughter Cleopatra in marriage, he resigned, by way of dowry, the provinces of Cœlo-Syria and Palestine. By these means Judea reverted to the Egyptian crown, upon which Joseph, the nephew of Onias the high-priest, was reinstated in the office of collecting the king's revenues in those provinces.

Soon after Antiochus had left Judea in order to oppose the Romans, Ptolemy had a son by his wife Cleopatra, on which occasion it was necessary for Joseph (among the other great officers of state) to congratulate the king and queen, and to make them the usual presents. Joseph was now far advanced in years, and as a journey from Jerusalem was too fatiguing for him, he resolved to send one of his sons in his stead. He accordingly assembled them together, and severally asked them which would chuse to engage in the business. The eldest positively refused, and the next apologized, by saying he was totally unacquainted with the customs and ceremonies of a court. At length it was resolved, as well by the approbation of Joseph, as the rest of the children, that Hyrcanus

nus* should be sent, who, though the youngest, was, from his superior and distinguished abilities, best qualified for such a negotiation.

This matter being adjusted Joseph asked his son what he thought would be sufficient to defray the expences of his embassy, and to purchase the necessary presents for the king and queen. Hyrcanus told him ten talents, and recommended that instead of sending the presents from Judea, they should be purchased at Alexandria, and that he would give him letters of credit on Arion (the person in that city to whom Joseph remitted the money gathered in Syria to be deposited in the royal treasury) for that purpose. "I would not (said he) recommend the sending from this place any presents to the king; but write to your agent at Alexandria to furnish me with the proper gifts."

Joseph complied with his son's request, and by these means the latter obtained an unlimited credit on his agent in that city. As soon, therefore, as he arrived at Alexandria, he immediately went to Arion, and, instead of ten talents, demanded a thousand. Surprized at so considerable a demand, Arion refused complying with his request, saying, "What! do you want to waste it in luxury? No, Sir, your father's fortune was made by industry, and you would do well to follow his example. I will give you only ten talents, and those I will see expended in the presents you are to make."

This abrupt reply highly offended Hyrcanus, who, for some time, expostulated with him, but finding him continue absolute in not complying with his demand, he, by his superiority of power in consequence of his father's authority, had him committed to prison. The wife of Arion, who was on good terms with the queen, informed her of the treatment her husband had received from Hyrcanus, and the queen related the whole particulars to the king. In consequence of this the king sent a message to Hyrcanus, expressing his astonishment at his conduct, and ordering him immediately to attend and clear himself of the charge alledged against him. Hyrcanus desired the messenger to tell his master that he could not wait on him till he was furnished with the presents (the means of doing which were denied him by Arion) which his father had ordered as a testimony of his duty and gratitude; and that, with regard to punishing a refractory servant, he thought himself justified; for the ill example of an inferior might at length reach the king himself, and where authority was despised, the precedent might be dangerous.

* The birth of this young man was attended with some very singular circumstances, the particulars of which are these: As Joseph's occasions, in his less advanced years, frequently called him to Alexandria, one night, while he was at supper with his royal master, he fell desperately in love with a beautiful damsel, who, among others, was dancing for the amusement of the king. Not being able to master his inordinate passion, he communicated his affection for the damsel to his brother Solimius (who accompanied him in his journey, and had with him a daughter that was marriageable) desiring him, if possible, to procure him the enjoyment of her, but in as secret a manner as he could on account of the sin, as well as disgrace, that would attend such an act. Solimius promised to comply with his request, but instead of the damsel of whom he was so much enamoured, he conveyed his own daughter into Joseph's bed,

When the king received this answer, instead of being offended with Hyrcanus, he highly applauded him for the dignity of his sentiments; and Arion finding he had no reason to expect favour or protection from the king, compounded for his liberty, by paying Hyrcanus the thousand talents he had demanded.

As soon as Hyrcanus had got the money he purchased of the merchants at Alexandria one hundred beautiful boys, and the like number of girls, at the price of a talent each; having done which, and put them in a proper place of security, he repaired to the court, and was graciously received by the king. The next day he, with many other persons of distinction, was invited to dine at the royal table, upon which the master of the ceremonies, on account of the youth of Hyrcanus, placed him at the bottom of the table. That part of the company that sat next to Hyrcanus, looking upon him with contempt, resolved to shew their disrespect by unanimously agreeing to lay their bones on his plate, desiring, at the same time, Tryphon, the king's jester, to ridicule him. This Tryphon attempted to do, by desiring the king to notice the circumstance, saying, at the same time, that so had Hyrcanus's father picked the bones of all Syria. The king, smiling, asked Hyrcanus how he came by so many bones. "Sir, replied he, (looking stedfastly on the company) dogs eat bones as well as meat; but men put the bones aside." This answer highly pleased the king, and instead of the laugh being thrown on Hyrcanus, it fell on Tryphon and the company present.

The next day Hyrcanus privately enquired of the servants what their masters intended to present to the king on the birth of the prince; to which some said twelve talents, and others more or less, while Hyrcanus seemed to be uneasy that it was out of his power to give more than five. This pretension of poverty was highly pleasing to the servants, who failed not to tell their masters of it, thinking the youth would be disgraced in the king's opinion by the smallness of his present; but they soon found themselves mistaken. On the following day, which was the time appointed for making the presents, the highest gift was twenty talents, except that made by Hyrcanus, who presented the hundred boys to the king, and the hundred girls to the queen, who had all a talent in each hand; so that in this article he expended four hundred talents. This gift astonished not only the king, but all the company present; exclusive of which Hyrcanus

and, the next morning, as secretly conveyed her away, so that his brother did not discover the deception. This was repeated several nights, when Joseph growing more and more enamoured of his fair, though unknown partner, one day complained to his brother of his hard fate, in being prohibited, by the laws of his religion, to marry the woman he loved. On this Solimius discovered to him the whole affair, telling him that, instead of the admired dancer, he had put his own daughter to bed to him, thinking it less criminal to deceive his own child, than to suffer him to join himself to a strange woman, which their law strictly forbade. The great surprize of this discovery, and the singular instance of Solimius's affection for his brother, wrought on the mind of Joseph, that he immediately made the young woman his wife, and of her, the next year, was born Hyrcanus.

canus gave many valuable presents to the courtiers and great officers of state, and the remainder of the money he had received from Arion he converted to his own private use.

The distinguished liberality of Hyrcanus so wrought on the king and queen that he became the greatest favourite at court; and of this he took a base advantage by converting his interest and influence to the injury of his father. Pretending to the king that Joseph, from his great age and imbecility, was incapable of discharging the office with which he was entrusted, he obtained a commission to be the collector of the royal revenues in all the country beyond the river Jordan. As soon as his brothers heard in what a base manner he had acted they were so enraged that (with their father's connivance at least, if not direct approbation) they resolved to way-lay him, and cut him off on his return. This resolution they attempted to put in execution, but the guards who attended him proved too strong in the assault, and two of his brothers were killed.

When Hyrcanus arrived at Jerusalem his father would not see him, nor would any of his old acquaintance take the least notice of him; so that finding himself universally despised for his perfidy, he left Jerusalem, passed the river Jordan, and entered upon the execution of his office.

On the death of Joseph (which happened a short time after Hyrcanus had, by his iniquity, supplanted him) a war commenced between him and his surviving brothers about the paternal estate, which, for some time, disturbed the peace of the Jews at Jerusalem. As the high-priest, however, and the generality of the people, sided with the brothers, Hyrcanus was again forced to retreat beyond the Jordan, where he lived in a strong castle * till the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, who, threatening to punish him according to his deserts, to avoid the consequences, he fell upon his own sword, and put a period to his existence.

C H A P. XI.

Seleucus Philopater succeeds Antiochus the Great on the throne of Syria. He at first favours the Jews, but afterwards sends his treasurer Heliodorus to plunder the temple at Jerusalem, who is prevented from executing his design by the sudden appearance of a number of angels. Heliodorus poisons Seleucus in hopes of gaining the crown, but is disappointed by means of Eumenes, king of Pergamus and his brother, who place Antiochus Epiphanes (son of Antiochus the Great) on the Syrian throne. Great bribery and corruption among the Jewish high-priests. Antiochus exercises singular cruelty on the Jews, profanes the temple, and plunders it. Apollonius, the general of Antiochus's forces, is sent to besiege Jerusalem, which he takes, and massacres great numbers of the inhabitants. Antiochus compels the Jews to renounce their religion, in endeavouring to avoid which many are cruelly put to death. The melancholy story of Solomona and her seven sons, who, after suffering the most severe torments, at length die martyrs for the sake of their religion.

ON the death of Antiochus the Great †, his son Seleucus Philopater succeeded him on the throne of Syria, to which, at that time, was annexed Judea and the other adjacent provinces. For some time after his accession he treated the Jews with the most distinguished respect, and, at his own expence, supplied them with all things necessary for the service of the temple. At length, however, he greatly altered in his disposition, and attempted to commit depredations on the very place to which he had been so great a benefactor. Being informed by one Simon,

of the tribe of Benjamin, that there were great riches in the temple, he sent Heliodorus, his treasurer, with a strong body of forces, to plunder it, ordering him to bring all he could find to him at Antioch.

Heliodorus, having received these orders from the king, immediately repaired to Jerusalem, in order to carry them into execution. On his arrival thither, without hesitation, he went into the temple, but on his entering the sacred treasury (his guards standing at the door) he was suddenly stopped by the appearance of angels, who seemed

* Josephus tells us that the walls of this castle were of white stone, with figures of various animals curiously carved on them. A deep ditch, or fish-pond, was dug round the castle, and in a mountain opposite to it passages were cut several furlongs in length, but, for security sake, only wide enough at the mouth for one man to enter at a time. Within the castle were lodging, dining-rooms, and other places of entertainment, with stately buildings, courts, gardens and fountains. It was situated on the borders of Arabia and Judea beyond Jordan, near the land of the Essebonites, and received the name of Tyre.

† The death of this prince was untimely, and occasioned

by the following circumstance. Being greatly distressed for want of money, and hearing that there was considerable treasure in the temple of Jupiter Belus, situated in the province of Elymais, he went thither, attacked the temple in the night, and plundered it of all its riches. This so enraged the people of the country, that, hastily assembling together, they fell on Antiochus, and not only slew him, but all that were with him. He was a prince possessed of great humanity and beneficence, and conducted himself with that valour, prudence, and strictness of justice, that made him deservedly obtain the title of *Antiochus the Great*.

seemed to be on horseback, armed to defend the place against his sacrilegious intentions †. The infidel general was so alarmed at this unexpected sight, that he immediately fell speechless on the ground, which being observed by his attendants, they put him on a litter, and carried him without the temple. He remained totally senseless for some time, upon which some of his friends besought Onias the high-priest to intercede in his behalf, by praying to God to restore him to his senses and life, he appearing to be divested of both. Onias, being fearful lest Seleucus should imagine that some treachery had been done to Heliodorus by the Jews, complied with their request, and offered up a sacrifice for the restoration of his health. While the high-priest was performing this service, the same young men, in the same cloathing, appeared before Heliodorus, saying, "Give Onias the high-priest great thanks, inasmuch as, for his sake, the Lord hath granted thee life. And seeing that thou hast been scourged from heaven, declare unto all men the mighty power of God." Having said this they instantly disappeared.

Heliodorus being thoroughly convinced of the impropriety and wickedness of his conduct, together with the obligation he lay under to Onias, offered up a sacrifice to the Lord for his sins; having done which, and, as a mark of acknowledgment to Onias, saluted him, he left Jerusalem, and, with his forces, returned home.

As soon as Heliodorus arrived at Antioch, he not only testified to the king, but likewise to all the people, the works of the great God which he had seen at Jerusalem, and related to them all the particulars that had passed during his stay at that place. Seleucus, being still desirous of accomplishing his ends, and thinking Heliodorus had failed from want of courage, asked him whom he thought the most proper to send in his stead. To which Heliodorus replied, "If thou hast any enemy, or traitor, send him thither, and thou shalt receive him well scourged, if he escape with his life: for in that place, no doubt, there is an especial power of God. For he that dwelleth in heaven hath his eye on that place, and defendeth it, and he beateth and destroyeth them that come to hurt it."

Some time after this Heliodorus, being desirous of obtaining the sovereignty to himself, poisoned his master Seleucus, in hopes of succeeding him §; but, at the instigation of Eumenes, king of Pergamus, in conjunction with his brother Attalus, the design of Heliodorus was obstructed and rendered of none effect, those two, by their elevated situations, and powerful interest, placing on the throne Antiochus,

surnamed Epiphanes, another son of the late Antiochus the Great.

This prince was, in disposition, quite the reverse of his father, being haughty, tyrannical and cruel. He was the greatest persecutor the Jews ever had, and during his reign great numbers of them were, by his baseness, put to death. Soon after his accession, being in great want of money to discharge an heavy tribute he had to pay the Romans, he deposed Onias the high-priest, a man of the most singular humanity and piety, and, for three hundred and sixty talents, (which he engaged to pay annually) sold it to his brother Jason. But, as Jason had supplanted Onias, so his brother Menelaus, being sent to Antioch with this tribute-money, for three hundred talents more than Jason had given, purchased the priesthood, and had him, in like manner, deposed; upon which Jason withdrew to the country of the Ammonites, where he continued some time in expectation that fortune would produce an advantageous turn in his favour.

Thus did Menelaus obtain the priesthood of his brother Jason, but being afterwards summoned to appear before the king at Antioch for non-payment of the money, he relinquished it to another brother named Lysimachus. Soon after this, repenting of his tameness in delivering up the office of high-priest, he sold many of the sacred vessels to recover it; and, lest Onias, (who was withdrawn to Daphne, a place not far from Antioch) should again obtain the priesthood, he caused him to be murdered by Andronicus, to whom he gave a considerable reward for executing the business. This assassin, however, soon met with the punishment he merited, for Antiochus hearing of what he had done, ordered him to be apprehended, led to the place where he had murdered Onias, and there put to death. In the mean time the Jews, mutinying against Lysimachus, slew him at Jerusalem; after which they deputed three proper persons to go to the king at Antioch, and lay an accusation before him against Menelaus. But such was the bribery of the Syrian court, and such the artifices of Menelaus, who was the contriver of all these mischiefs, that he acquitted himself before the king, and, instead of receiving punishment himself, procured the three persons, who came from Jerusalem to accuse him, to be condemned and executed.

Some time after this Antiochus was engaged in a war with the Egyptians, during which a false rumour was spread throughout Palestine that he was dead. Jason, (who had artfully obtained the high-priesthood from his brother Onias, had

been

† The manner in which the Author of the Book of Maccabees relates this circumstance is as follows: In speaking of Heliodorus attempting to enter the treasury of the temple, he says, "As he was there, with his guard about the treasury, the Lord of Spirits, and the prince of all power, caused a great apparition, so that all who presumed to go in with him, were astonished at the power of God, and fainted, and were sore afraid. For there appeared unto them an horse with a terrible rider upon him, and adorned with a very fair covering, and he ran fiercely, and smote at Heliodorus with his forefeet, and it seemed that he that sat upon the horse had compleat harness of

gold. Moreover, two other young men appeared before him, notable in strength, excellent in beauty, and comely in apparel, who stood by him on either side, and scourged him continually, and gave him many sore stripes. And Heliodorus fell suddenly unto the ground, and was compassed with great darkness; but they that were with him took him up, and put him into a litter, being unable to help himself with his weapons: and manifestly they acknowledged the power of God." See 2 Macc. iii. 24, &c.

§ About this time died Ptolemy Epiphanes, king of Egypt, who left two sons, named Philometer and Physcon, the former of whom succeeded him on the throne.

been supplanted by his brother Menelaus, and retired into the country of the Ammonites) hearing of this intelligence, thought it a convenient opportunity for him to attempt regaining the office of high-priest, for which purpose he marched, at the head of a thousand men, to Jerusalem. He soon made himself master of the city, and obliged Menelaus to secure himself by flying to the castle, after which he acted all manner of cruelties on his fellow-citizens, and put to death, without mercy, all he met with whom he took to be his adversaries. Having done this, and knowing the citadel too strong to be reduced, he made a hasty retreat into the country of the Ammonites; soon after which he was, by Aretas king of Arabia, cast into prison, from whence he made his escape, and fled from one city to another, till at length he died at Lacedemon.

As soon as Antiochus heard of the rupture that had taken place at Jerusalem, he left Egypt, and marched into Judea, being fearful lest the whole of the Jewish nation might become refractory and revolt. In his way he was informed that the Jews, having received intelligence of his death, had made great rejoicings on the occasion. This circumstance so enraged him against those people, that hastening to Jerusalem he immediately laid siege to the place, and taking it by storm, put to death, in the space of three days, no less than 40,000 people, making the like number captives, and selling them for slaves to the inhabitants of the neighbouring kingdoms.

Not satisfied with this Antiochus, accompanied by the traitor Menelaus, profanely entered the sacred temple, from whence he took away many golden vessels, and rich donatives that had been presented by former kings, the value of which amounted to about one thousand eight hundred talents. With this plunder Antiochus returned to Antioch, leaving behind him one Philip, a Phrygian (a man, if possible, more barbarous and inhuman than himself) as governor of Judea. He also appointed Andronicus (another person no less cruel in his disposition) to be governor of Samaria; and Menelaus (who was worse than all the rest) he fixed in the office of high-priest, that he might be a constant terror to the poor Jews who resided at Jerusalem*.

This was but the beginning of Antiochus's cruelty towards the Jews, for soon after his return to Antioch, he sent Apollonius, one of his generals, with an army of 22,000 men to Jerusalem, with orders to kill all the young and robust men he found in the city, and to sell the women and children for slaves, leaving only the more aged to inhabit the place. When Apollonius came before the city, he remained without it several days, not making any attempt to attack it, from whence the Jews, who had some disagreeable apprehensions on his arrival, thought

themselves secure. In this, however, they soon found themselves mistaken, for while they were at their devotions on the sabbath, Apollonius entered the city, massacred great numbers of the inhabitants, plundered the place, led away the women and children captives, and obliged many to fly to caves and deserts to secure themselves from the general destruction.

A short time after this (and while Apollonius was still at Jerusalem) Antiochus sent one Athenæus, a man well versed in all the ceremonies of the Grecian idolatry, to Jerusalem, with orders that the people, not only in that city, but throughout the whole land of Judea, should renounce their ancient rites and usages, and universally conform themselves to the religion of the Greeks. These orders Athenæus, with the assistance of Apollonius, put in full execution. No sooner did he arrive at Jerusalem, than all sacrifices to the God of Israel were laid aside, and the rites of the Jewish religion totally suppressed. The temple was dedicated to Jupiter Olympius (the principal idol of the Greeks) whose image was placed on the Altar of Burnt-Offerings, and all the people were obliged to sacrifice to it on pain of death. Those who met in caves, and other secret places, to keep the sabbath, were, if discovered, burnt. The Book of the Law was first torn, and then committed to the flames: the circumcision of infants was prohibited; and such women as were accused of having circumcised their children were first publicly led about the city with their infants hanging at their breasts, and then thrown headlong from the highest part of the walls, so that the greater number of them, with their innocent offsprings, suffered miserable deaths.

As these severities were practised to make the Jews renounce their religion, so the like were used to make them embrace the worship of the heathens. In all the cities throughout Judea, altars, groves, and chapels for idols were set up, and officers sent, once every month, to compel the people, on pain of being put to the torture or death, to offer victims to the different idols of the Grecians, and to eat of the flesh of swine, and of other unclean beasts, that were, at those times, sacrificed. In short, no manner of cruelty was omitted to make the poor Jews, in the first instance, renounce their own religion, and, in the second, embrace the idolatry of the Greeks.

But though, in the course of this terrible persecution, many of these wretched people yielded to violence, yet there were some who chose rather to die, than to forsake the law of their God. Among the latter of these, one of the most memorable note was Eleazar, a principal doctor of the law, of the family of the priests, and much esteemed by many of the friends of Antiochus, on account of his great age and character. This good man, refusing to renounce his religion, or comply with any idolatrous maxims

* The Author of the Books of Maccabees (2 Macc. v. 2, 3.) tells us, that about this time there were seen at Jerusalem, for forty days together, strange sights in the air of horsemen and footmen, armed with shields, spears, and

swords, and in great companies fighting against, and charging each other, as in battle array; which foreboded those calamities of war and desolation that soon after happened, not only in Jerusalem, but in most parts of Judea.

maxims, was brought before the king, (who was seated in state, attended by his counsellors and governors, and protected by an armed guard) to answer for his obstinacy. As soon as Antiochus saw Eleazar, he addressed him in words to this effect: "I desire thee, reverend old man, before I proceed to extremities, to save thy life by consenting to eat the flesh of swine. I respect thy age and grey hairs, and am astonished that thou shouldest persevere in the Jewish superstition, after a length of years that might have taught thee more wisdom. It is strange to me that men should be so unjust to themselves, and so ungrateful to nature, as to deny themselves the enjoyment of those innocent gratifications which her bounty has provided. For what reason shouldest thou refrain from the taste of the flesh of swine, which is the most delicate of all food, and seems to have been bestowed upon us by heaven, in the fulness of its bounty? This conduct in others might seem to carry its excuse with it; but in a man of thy discernment it is the height of folly to draw down a certain judgment on thy own head, by despising my authority, through an idle irreligious prejudice. Let me then persuade thee to open thine eyes, awake from thy dream, and free thyself from a bondage which arises from a ridiculous singularity of opinion. Shall I hope that this expostulation may urge thee to have a proper regard to thyself by accepting that kindness which I offer in compassion to thy age? I think it ought: for though thy reason may not be convinced of the absurdity of the opinion thou hast entertained, yet thou mightest allow, that if there be a Divine Being which requires the observance of thy religion, that Being has goodness sufficient to pardon the breach of his laws, when the offence does not arise from an act of the will, but is the effect of absolute and irresistible compulsion."

The king having ended his speech, Eleazar entreated permission to make a reply; which being granted, he spoke to the following purpose, in the presence of the whole assembly. "It is proper that your majesty should be informed, that we who are firmly persuaded that the law given us by God should be in all things strictly obeyed, have no conception that any force or necessity can operate so strongly as to allow us to dispense with any part of this law. You have hinted that our law is not divine: admitting that to be fact, Sir, yet it ought to be fully binding on us, in all cases whatsoever, while we think it so. Your majesty will not therefore suppose that if we should be base enough to defile ourselves by eating unclean meats, the crime would be deemed either trifling or pardonable. Whether the instance in which a man offends be greater or less, the insolence of the culprit is the same, whatever the fact be. You have insinuated, Sir, that our religion is beneath the notice of philosophers, and men of reason; but permit me to say that it is the perfection of all philosophy; since it instructs us in the arts of temperance, and directs us to conquer our passionate desires for sublunary pleasures. It

enjoins us to the practice of fortitude, and recommends the cheerful submission to pain. It prescribes rules of rigid justice, and commands us to worship only that Almighty Being, to whom alone reverence can be due. Wherefore we must not presume to eat unclean and prohibited food; for we are convinced that God, the author of nature, paid a proper attention to it; and that the institution of this law, so far from being a grievance, was an act of benevolence; that forbidden things are prejudicial to our souls, and those only on which we are permitted to feed are useful to us. It is therefore the highest cruelty to compel us to a violation of our law, and to eat those things which are forbidden because they are of a noxious quality. But, Sir, you shall never thus triumph over me. I scorn the idea of violating the solemn oaths and sacred engagements, by which our forefathers have bound themselves and their descendants to the observance of this law. I will not submit, though you command my eyes to be plucked out, and my body burnt. Age hath not yet so impaired my intellectual or corporeal faculties, but that my reason is still vigorous on the call of duty and religion. If you are offended with this reply, prepare your instruments of torture, and encrease the heat of your furnace: but, old as I am, I will never violate the laws of God and my country to save my life. I will not desert the law in which I have been instructed; I will never abjure that temperance, the best of virtues, which teaches us to conquer our appetites: I will not disgrace my philosophy, nor bring a stain on the order of priesthood, and the study of the law. I will maintain my soul unspotted as my forefathers, and remain undaunted to death, under all the torments you can inflict."

Eleazar having made this magnanimous reply to the speech of the tyrant, the soldiers dragged him to the place of execution. Having stripped off his cloaths, they bound him, and whipped him till the skin parted from his flesh; an officer on each side him, crying, "Obey the king's orders." Eleazar seemed perfectly unmoved by their severity, and stood with his eyes elevated towards heaven, till his flesh was torn from his bones, and the blood streamed to the ground. At length, unable to bear his pangs, he dropped down: but though his body was thus reduced, he appeared to possess his mind in full perfection. On this, one of the soldiers stamped on his belly, to oblige him to rise: but he bore all his sufferings with such an unexampled courage, that even those who inflicted them were astonished at such extraordinary magnanimity of soul in so old and infirm a body.

But some of his tormentors, though servants of the king, pitying his age, and recollecting their former acquaintance with him, addressed him as follows: "Why, Eleazar, wilt thou submit to endure such variety of torment without any cause? Consent that we put before thee clean and lawful meat, when thou mayest pretend to eat swine's flesh, agreeable to the king's order, and thus save thy life without violating the law." To this, Eleazar replied:

"Let

“ Let it not be said that we, who are children
“ of Abraham, can behave in so artful and pu-
“ sillanious a manner as only to pretend to do
“ an unbecoming action. It would be strange
“ conduct in me, who have hitherto obeyed the
“ laws of truth, and preserved an unspotted
“ character, to set an evil example to others, by
“ denying my principles in my old age; to
“ drag out the remainder of life at the expence
“ of dissimulation, and become an object of the
“ public contempt for my pusillanimity.” His
tormentors observing this resolution, and finding
that their offered mercy had no effect on him,
conducted him to the fire, on which they threw
him, cruelly tormenting him, and poured scald-
ing liquor upon his nostrils as he burnt. When
his flesh was almost separated from his bones; he
lifted his eyes towards heaven, and said, “ O God,
“ thou art witness to the torments I suffer, and
“ that I prefer death by fire, in obedience to thy
“ law; rather than a continuance of life by the
“ transgression of it. Have mercy, therefore,
“ O God, on thy people, and let my death ex-
“ piate their crimes. Accept thy life for theirs,
“ and let my blood operate as a purifying sa-
“ crifice.” Having said this, the good old
man soon after resigned his soul into the hands
of him who gave it.

The next instance of religious fortitude was
displayed in the persons of the heroine Solo-
mona and her seven sons, who, for refusing
to renounce their religion and embrace idolatry,
were, by order of Antiochus, brought from their
habitations to the city of Antioch, in order to
receive punishment for disobeying the king’s
commands. Antiochus, pretending pity to their
youth, and respect to their family (which was
noble) used all the arguments he could to per-
suade them to renounce their religion, and em-
brace that of the Grecians, promising them
great rewards and promotions if they complied,
but at the same time threatening them with the
severest punishments if they remained obstinate.
Having said this, he ordered a variety of instru-
ments for torture (which had been provided on the
occasion) to be shewn them, thinking to terrify
them into compliance with the sad prospect of
what, should they refuse, they were likely to
suffer. But all these instruments and engines
of death could no more terrify, than the allure-
ments of the tyrant could persuade, them: in-
spired with a truly holy zeal and celestial bravery;
they unanimously declared their obedience to
the law of God, and the precepts which he de-
livered by Moses, assuring him that his cruelty
could not hurt them: that all the effect their
pains could have would be to secure to them the
glorious rewards due to unshaken patience and
injured virtue. They then apprized him of
what a material difference there would be in the
issue of his conduct between him and them; for
by the murder of so many innocent men he
would arm the Divine vengeance against him,
and for the temporal pains which he inflicted on
them would subject himself to everlasting tor-
ments.

The constancy and zeal of these brave youths
(who were greatly encouraged by their aged
and pious parent) so enraged the tyrant, that
he gave orders for the executioners to bring the

eldest to torture. They accordingly stripped off
his clothes, bound his hands and arms and
placed him in a posture for receiving the scourge.
This he endured with the most astonishing pa-
tience, insomuch that the executioners, finding
themselves more wearied in inflicting this punish-
ment than he was in receiving it, gave over,
unloosed him, and then bound him on the wheel.
The noble youth being then extended, with his
bones broken, and joints dislocated, he re-
proached his tormentor in these words: “ O
“ execrable tyrant, and persecutor of the inno-
“ cent! Thou dost not treat me thus inhu-
“ manly for any breach either of Divine or
“ human laws, but for my zeal to God, and his
“ holy ordinances.” The soldiers then (com-
passionating the distress of the youth) advised
him to save his life by complying with the king’s
commands; to whom he replied, “ You may
“ exercise your cruelty on my body, but you
“ cannot torture my mind; that is out of your
“ power; and I will convince you, by this trial
“ upon my person, that it is the peculiar glory
“ of the Hebrew nation to be invincibly firm
“ in their sufferings for virtue and a good con-
“ science.” The executioners then extended
his body still more, and to encrease his punish-
ment made a fire by the wheel, over which they
turned him till his body was quite parched with
the heat. But this additional torture the brave
youth bore with such magnanimity, as if the
fire had only served to refine him into a creature
immortal. At length, nature being exhausted,
he gave up the ghost, first taking a final farewell
of his brethren in these words: “ Be sure you
“ follow my example, and desert me not in this
“ noble conflict. Shame the tyrant with your
“ sufferings, and die gloriously in the service of
“ God, who will humble this bloody monster
“ with punishments as uncommon and amazing
“ as is his own pride and cruelty.”

The elder brother being thus dispatched, the
second was immediately brought on the tragical
stage, where, being asked whether he would eat
of their sacrificed meat, he, with an undaunted
courage, and without the least hesitation, boldly
refused. In consequence of this the execution-
ers (by the king’s orders) with pincers drew off
all the flesh from the muscles of his neck to the
chin, and all the hair and skin off his face and
head. In this dreadful condition he remained
for some time, till finding nature nearly exhaust-
ed, he took leave of the cruel Antiochus, and
the world, in words to this effect: “ How wel-
“ come is death in any shape to him that suffers
“ for truth and religion! The pleasure of an
“ innocent mind, and the comfort of a clear
“ conscience, soften my sufferings, and support
“ my spirits, whilst thou (addressing himself to
“ Antiochus) art racked with the cutting ap-
“ prehensions of a guilty mind. Thy cruelties
“ I suffer with more pleasure than thou canst
“ execute them; for thy own heart must tell
“ thee that thou dost wickedly in punishing the
“ innocent for asserting the truth, and perse-
“ vering in the worship and love of God, for
“ which, be assured thou wilt not escape the
“ terrible vengeance of a just and angry God.”

The third brother was so far from being daun-
ted at the sight of what the others had endured,
that,

that, when he was brought on the stage, and pressed by the tyrant to take warning by their deaths, he, in a stern manner, replied, "The same father and mother brought us into the world, and the same master formed our minds with the same principles: think not therefore, that I will, by any pusillanimous retreat, endeavour to evade thy cruelty, and desert the glorious cause of suffering for our religion. Lose no time, for I come prepared to suffer, not to make speeches." This resolute answer so enraged the haughty tyrant, that he thought to make his torments much more severe than what had been inflicted on his two elder brothers: he therefore commanded the executioners to place his hands and feet in the screws, where, with a sudden and violent wrench, they immediately dislocated all the joints of his fingers and toes. This done, they continued to draw the engine yet higher, till they had twisted his legs, arms and shoulder bones out of their sockets; but finding him still to survive all these distortions, they drew off the skin at the ends of his fingers, and flayed him from the very crown of his head. Not content with having mangled his body in this merciless manner, they dragged him to the wheel, where they so violently distended him, that the blood gushed from all parts of his body. At length, nature being nearly exhausted, the heroic youth closed the bloody scene with the following dreadful prognostic of the tyrant's fate: "O wicked and most inhuman of all tyrants! we suffer thus for the love of God and his most just law; but thou, who art the cause of all this injustice and cruelty, shalt suffer endless torments."

The fourth brother being brought on the stage was exhorted by Antiochus to consider and avoid inevitable destruction which he saw preparing for him. But he, resolving not to stain the honour of his family, and disgrace the cause of religion by any pusillanimous act, replied, "The sight of all your tortures, in their dismal appearances, cannot so fright me, as to make me derogate from the noble example of my brethren. Let thy tortures be as extravagant as thy malice and cruelty can invent, they shall only serve to prove me a branch of the same stock, and animated with the very same soul with those whose blood thy impious hands have spilt." The barbarous Antiochus was so incensed at this, that he ordered the executioners immediately to cut out his tongue. But the pious youth, not in the least terrified at these orders, cried out, "Here it is ready for thy wicked executioners to exercise their cruelty upon: But know, thou tyrant, that by depriving me of the use of this organ of speech thou canst not make my reason dumb. O that I might, to glorify God, lose my life by inches! But as for thee, guilt and vengeance will soon overtake thee, who cuttest out this inoffensive tongue that hath been employed in making melody, and singing praises to God, who formed it for that purpose." After saying this, the executioners cut out his tongue, and tied it to the trunk of his body, which being at length exhausted with pain, and mangled in the most miserable manner, he gave up the ghost.

Excessive torment having thus finished the life of the fourth brother, the fifth, eager to have his share in this honourable conflict, boldly stepped forward uncalled for, and offering himself to the torture, addressed Antiochus as follows: "Thou seest, most inhuman tyrant, I wait not your tedious orders, but voluntarily offer myself to the trial, and dare thy cruelty in defence of my faith. The sooner thou dispatchest me, the sooner will *my happiness* be compleat, and *thy iniquities* make thee ripe for vengeance. Tell me, thou devourer of mankind, what could provoke thee to torment and murder the innocent? Is it a crime to serve that God that created the world? And shall we not worship him by whom we live, and who hath instituted the methods by which we are to regulate our lives? In this we defy thy tortures, and despise thy punishments, which will translate *us* to a happy eternity, and *thee* to endless torments." Having said this, the soldiers bound him to the wheel, and drawing the screws strait, they at once dislocated the joints of his limbs and back, so that he was twisted round the wheel. In this dreadful situation he remained for some time, till at length, being almost strangled, he, previous to his departure, took leave of his cruel persecutor in words to this effect: "Little dost thou imagine, most execrable tyrant, the benefit thy cruelty procures to us; for the more thou ragest against us in these unheard-of tortures, the more acceptable thou renderest us unto God. This momentary pain will procure us everlasting rest, and every torture only furnishes us with the opportunity of exercising and shewing our patience."

The sixth brother being brought forward, the tyrant asked him whether he would accept of the terms of deliverance? To which the brave youth replied, "Though I am inferior in years to my brothers, who have suffered before me, yet is my soul equal in magnanimity to theirs; and as we were nourished and educated together in the fear of God, we ought to persist in the same to death. Think not, therefore, to terrify or persuade me to relinquish the glorious cause of religion by the apprehension or fears of torture, for I am ready to suffer as they have done; and know, that God will support me in the defence of a good conscience under the greatest pains thou canst inflict." Antiochus, finding him thus resolute, ordered the executioners to fasten him to the wheel, which being done, and the greater part of his bones broken, they then placed fire under him; not satisfied with which, the soldiers, by the king's command, heated spits and spears red hot, and thrust them into his back and sides till his bowels and entrails were nearly consumed. In this extremity of pain, he had yet strength enough to address himself to his persecutor as follows: "O glorious conflict, in which so many brethren have engaged for their religion, and all come off with conquest! I will bear my brethren company in so noble a death, and add to the number of plagues due to thee, O wicked inventor of artful cruelty, and implacable foe of all that

adhere

"adhere to the true religion! Six of us have
"now baffled thy malice and rage; for I must
"needs account thee baffled, who hast, without
"success, attempted to force us from our duty.
"Thy fires, methinks, are cool, thy racks easy,
"and thy guards no longer tormentors and ex-
"ecutioners, but defenders and promoters of
"our law and its honour, since they assist us in
"giving testimony to it, and contribute to the
"triumphs of the religion they are not able to
"suppress." Having said this, just as he was
"ready to expire, they took him from the wheel,
and throwing him into a cauldron of boiling li-
quor, finally closed his existence.

And now the seventh, and youngest, brother
appeared, whom, when the tyrant saw fettered
and pinioned, though he had been so implacably
outrageous against the rest, his hard heart began
a little to relent: wherefore, calling him up to
the throne where he sat, he began to try him
with soft words and fair means. "You have
"seen (said he) young man, the miserable end
"to which your brothers have, by their obstina-
"cy, brought themselves, and which will be
"your fate in a few minutes, if, by their ex-
"ample, you do not become wiser. But I hope
"better things from you; and, as an encourage-
"ment, I make you a generous offer of my
"esteem and friendship, and promise, in case
"of your obedience, to promote you to places
"both of honour and profit." Then addressing
himself to the mother of these brave youths
(who had hitherto been a witness of her children's
sufferings) with a seeming compassion for her
loss, he entreated her to prevail upon her child,
in pity to herself at least, to be obedient to his
commands, that thereby she might not be totally
divested of all her family. But she, worthy of
the honour of being mother to such godly he-
roes, thus spoke to her son in the Hebrew
language: "In pity to me, my son, and in
"honour of thy family, despise the temptations
"of the tyrant, and defy his threats. Look up
"with hope to that God who made the world,
"and can deliver thee from thy cruel persecu-
"tors. Bravely imitate thy religious brethren,
"who have suffered the worst of deaths for their
"conscience sake: fear not the tortures this
"heathen can inflict; and be assured that in the
"day of mercy, which this tyrant will never
"see, I shall receive you all in celestial em-
"braces." The godly youth having, with great
attention, heard the admonition of his pious mo-
ther, on a sudden cried out, "Well then, un-
"bind me, and let me apply myself to the king
"and his friends about the throne." Antio-
chus, thinking, from this request, he was going
to make a conquest of the youth, ordered him
immediately to be unloosed; which being done,
he ran hastily to the side of the cauldron, (which
was near the king) and thus boldly addressed
him: "Most impious tyrant! Hast thou re-
"ceived from the hand of God a kingdom, and
"so many worldly blessings, and yet, without
"the least shame or remorse, canst murder the
"advocates and servants of him who thus ad-
"vanced thee? Is this the requital thou makest
"to a bountiful God, to rack and torture those
"who worship him, and for no other reason
"but because they worship him as he himself

"has directed? Be well assured this wickedness
"will not be forgotten, nor go unpunished:
"justice will pursue thee, and in the mean time
"lay up in store for thee torments and fires,
"not like thine here, which quickly consume
"the body, and put an end to pain, but such
"as shall be a store of fire, and pains inexhaus-
"tible. Canst thou call thyself a man, thou
"more than savage brute, and yet have no re-
"gard, no relenting for these most exquisite
"and studied torments, which thou inflictest on
"those who have the same nature, the same
"tender sense of sufferings with thyself? Is it
"possible a creature of like matter and form
"should take delight in mangling, burning,
"flaying, scourging, and killing his fellow-
"creatures? Yet such thou dost; but as thou
"art unlike us in disposition, so wilt thou be
"unlike us in thy fate and portion. For we
"who die to gratify thy malice have done
"our duty, and shall find favour and happiness
"with God; but thou, who hast put us on
"the truth of our religion with so much cause-
"less pain, such undeserved deaths, shalt howl
"for ever in despair, and be plagued with the
"bitter reproaches of this sad day's transactions.
"So dreadful, so infamous is thy case, so bles-
"sed, so glorious my martyred brethren; from
"whose honours and rewards think not that
"either flattery or fear shall exclude me: for
"know, I aspire to an equality with the best of
"them, and think it long till we meet again in
"the same sufferings here, and in the same bliss
"hereafter." Having said this, he threw himself
into the cauldron, and almost instantly expired.

And now, to close this bloody tragedy, the
soldiers approached to seize the godly matron in
order to execution; but she prevented all at-
tempts upon her person, and, without any force,
threw herself into the fire, defeating the tyrant's
rage and violence, disappointing all his wicked
contrivances, and exerting a most noble faith
and constancy. Thus ended this doleful, yet
glorious day, with the death of the victorious
Solomona, who triumphed in the sharpest ago-
nies of her sons and her own sufferings; and
thus did the whole of this pious family, through
a sea of the most exquisite pains, wade to the
port of eternal rest!

Thus the afflicted innocent expire,
Calm in their sufferings, chearful in the fire;
Expecting, for a momentary pain,
Eternal joys, and everlasting gain.
While the tyrannic, and the wicked, find
A tortur'd body, and tormented mind;
And when their vile atrocious lives they close,
A hell of horrors, and eternal woes.

We shall close our account of this dreadful
and melancholy scene with some few observations
and reflections made on the subject by that cele-
brated Jewish Historian Josephus. After relating
the particulars of the sufferings of each, he pro-
ceeds as follows:

How great, how interesting was the sight of
such a company, encouraging each other to per-
severe, their joint voices making an harmonious
concert! Thus did they animate each other:
"Remember, brothers, we are engaged in the
"same cause: let us die like brethren, in de-
"fence

“ fence of our God, and his law. The three
 “ brave Assyrian youths defied the furnace of
 “ the king of Babylon: let us imitate their
 “ glorious example.”

When religion and conscience are at stake, it becomes us to despise fear, and act with resolution. One of the brethren said, “ Courage, brother!” A second cried, “ Persevere;” A third exclaimed, “ Remember your ancestors, “ Abraham, who consented to sacrifice his son; “ and Isaac, who cheerfully submitted to be “ come that sacrifice.” They then mutually supported each other, saying, “ Let us gladly “ consecrate our souls to God: the lives which “ he has lent us, restore, and yield up our bodies in defence of our holy law. Wherefore “ should we fear those who only destroy the body? Our fear should be rather for the everlasting loss of our souls, which cannot happen “ to those who strictly adhere to the truth. “ Therefore let us arm ourselves with fortitude; “ so, in death, shall we be gladly received by “ Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and our constancy will be applauded by all our pious ancestors.”

As they were separately led to execution, those who remained encouraged the preceding, saying, “ Remember, brother, how thou shouldest behave; disgrace not those who have preceded, “ or those who are to follow thee.” Encouragement like this must have been very animating: the relationship of brother must have had its influence. The reader will conceive the power of that affection placed by Providence in the hearts of those who derive themselves from the same father, are born of the same mother, suck the same breast, are brought up at one table, taught by the same master, and educated in the same religion. Such was the affection and endearments between these brothers, and, of course, the encouragement and advice they gave each other could not fail of having its proper weight: for they were educated in the same faith, and taught to practice the same virtues; and their mutual virtue must have been increased by their mutual esteem; for natural esteem is always improved by an union in goodness and a mutual zeal for God’s service; so that the more religious each of these was, the more he would love each of his brethren, and become more worthy of their love. In this instance we may observe how passion was conquered by reason; for though the tender regard they entertained for each other was heightened by every consideration of birth, affinity, education, acquaintance, and personal merit, yet all these considerations were outweighed by the superior one of religion; so that, in so noble a cause, the tortures and deaths of such near relations, instead of pain, gave satisfaction to the survivors, who became undisturbed spectators of the gloomy tragedy.

Animated by exhortation, they were induced to despise pain, and subdue fraternal affection. Thus were their minds more ennobled than birth could make them. Not one of these youths gave signs of fear, or shrunk at the approach of death, in all its terrors, but advanced to meet the racks and fire, as men who were running the race of mortality, and impatient which should first reach the goal. As our hands, feet, and

other members, move according to the direction of the soul, so these heroic youths moved towards death, as if actuated by one common soul. Divine constellation of consenting brothers! As the world, created in seven days, conveys an idea of the perfect majesty, and goodness of God, thus do these seven martyrs, by their courage and constancy, afford us an example that ought to banish the fear of death. But, alas! we fall short of their pattern, though we cannot read or hear of the extremity of their sufferings, without the utmost agitation of mind.

What torment can exceed that of fire, which instantly pierces and consumes? Yet these valiant champions resolutely endured the severest torments. But to increase our wonder, and lessen that idea of magnanimity which men think their peculiar characteristic, let us produce the case of the woman, who gave glorious proofs of the sovereignty of reason over the passions; one whose sufferings were more severe than those of the parties before mentioned. The variety and extremity of a mother’s pains, in viewing the death of her seven sons, is scarcely to be comprehended. She must have been seven times murdered. The natural affections of parents are centered in the welfare of their children. This is evident even among beasts, who evince even a tenderness for their young, equal to that among men. But why need we mention beasts, when all nature is full of this passion for their offspring? The bees, though busy in building their cells, are careful to guard their hives; and when invaded by the drones, protect their young ones by their stings, which serve them as weapons of defence.

The mother of our heroic youths was so true a daughter of Abraham, that even her tenderness for her own children could not tempt her to violate her duty. So laudable was her zeal, that when the preservation and advancement of her sons was put in competition with religion, she wisely preferred the latter, obeyed God rather than the king, and wished them heavenly prosperity, rather than temporal. How shall we describe that tender paternal passion, that fondness for the offspring, that impresses on them the same features of body, and frequently the same disposition of mind? It would be hard to paint the concern they feel for any distress that attends these dearer parts of themselves: particularly that of mothers, whose natural fondness makes them still more susceptible of what affects their children, than fathers are. This mother had still more affection for her children than mothers commonly have: her love was augmented by seven painful births: and every fresh pang she suffered gave new force to that affection she felt for those for whom she bore those pangs.

Notwithstanding this, the love of God outweighed all present views of her children’s interest. She never loved them so tenderly as when they were giving proof of their constancy in the truth: they were wise, courageous, affectionate, and so dutiful as to die in support of the law, in obedience to their mother; while she, disdaining to let her tenderness operate too forcibly, or her reason be shaken by the torments they bore, exhorted them separately and jointly,

to shew their zeal for religion by despising sufferings and death.

Hail nature, thou common mother! Hail the love of parents! Hail the sympathetic feelings of maternal love! Behold a miracle: seven children separately racked and burnt in their mother's presence; yet her piety is unshaken by the sight. She saw the flesh of her children broiling, the joints of their hands, and faces torn off, and trembling on the ground: the skins of their hands and feet stripped, and thrown at her feet: all this she saw unmoved. The agonies she now bore for her children must be greater than those of child-birth, and proved her the noblest of her sex. Her expiring first-born moved her not: the languishing look of the second, and the groans of the third, she appeared not to feel. Not a tear did she drop at the cutting off of hands and heads, nor when the bodies of those dearer parts of herself were heaped around her. The last accents of her offspring, amidst their dying pains, were grateful to her ear. Though nature pleaded forcibly, she disdained to yield; and when urged to save a tender offspring, she gave them up to torment, in full hopes of their future happiness. She proved herself a true daughter of Abraham, by possessing his faith and magnanimity. Hail, mother of a family and zealous for religion and law! Great was thy patience and courage; thou envy of thy own sex, and wonder of ours! As the ark of Noah, which contained the surviving part of the living world rode in triumph over the waters of the flood; so thou, when tossed on the waves of passion, and driven by the winds of adversity, being sustained by thy zeal for religion, didst bravely outride the storm.

From the whole of Solomon's conduct in this tragical scene, it evidently appears that well-guided reason will have a complete dominion over the passions, however powerful. This is certainly the case with human nature in general, since we find that not only men, but even a woman could thus conquer all the common feelings, and defy the most exquisite torture.

Had this woman possessed the least weakness of temper, it is probable that she would have exclaimed to the following effect: "Unhappy wretch that I am, so lately blessed with seven sons, but now bereft of them all! O unfit child-bearing! O lost cares of nursing children destined to the fires, racks, and torments! Fruitless are my pains, fruitless my anxious days and nights, and lost is all the care of their education! Never more shall I behold my beloved children, never rejoice in their marriage, nor be happy in descendants of the second and third generation! Yet once was I happy in the number and virtue of my sons; but am now a forlorn widow, without one child to comfort my declining years, or to lay my weary head in the grave."

But so far was this admirable woman from thus complaining, or wishing her children to live, that they would have afflicted her if they had not died with glory. Her firm mind considered their extinction from this life as but a passage to a life immortal: she therefore entertained them to complete her joy, by sacrificing their lives in defence of their religion. Illustri-

ous mother! who, when she was seized with her sons, and was a witness of the torture and death of the good and pious Eleazar, engaged heartily in the glorious cause, and encouraged her children in an address, in the Hebrew language, to the following effect: "Behold, my sons, how glorious this conflict! If you should be called to suffer the same, behave with cheerfulness and courage, considering what an honour will thereby redound to our people, and the laws of our ancestors. It will be a disgrace to your youth and vigour if you sink under your trials, when a man, almost worn out by age and infirmities, hath already borne such extreme torture; from a sense of duty. Reflect, my dear children, what life is, and of whom you received it. It was the gift of God, and has been continued by his providence; and it is your duty to resign it at his pleasure. Surely you would not decline any pain for him, in obedience to whom Abraham was ready to sacrifice his son, the promised father of our people: nor did Isaac decline the weapon that was uplifted to divest him of life. The innocent and fearless Daniel was cast into the lions den, and the three children into the fiery furnace. A proper sense of their duty to God made them resolute to suffer for his sake; and you should be willing to bear equal sufferings, since you hold the same faith. Those who have a genuine sense of religion will not decline any sufferings in which the sacred cause shall engage them."

Thus were these seven children encouraged by their mother, who shewed them how just it was to die rather than violate the law of God, particularly when an eternal residence with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the realms of unending bliss, would be the assured consequence of their magnanimous and religious perseverance.

When the soldiers were about to seize and execute the mother she prevented them by throwing herself into the fire. Venerable matron, who thus defeated the tyrant's rage, standing like a firm building supported by seven pillars! Glorious mother! whose patience was sustained by an unshaken faith in God, and assured hopes of future recompence. Not brighter shines the moon in the firmament, encircled by the stars, than does she in giving to, and receiving light from, her seven sons, in the presence of God, in the celestial mansions. Her sons were truly of the faithful race of Abraham. Could one draw a picture of the whole scene, and every circumstance be fairly painted, our passions must be deeply engaged, and we should be struck with horror at the sight of the mother and children expiring under such horrid torments. Were a monument to be erected to their memory, the inscription on it should be to this effect: "Here lie interred an old mother and her seven brave sons murdered by a tyrant, who, in vain, attempted to destroy the constitution of the Jews: for these champions resisting, committed their cause to God, and persevered, in despite of torments and death, to assert the rights of their religion and country." In fact, the contest was divine: patience was put to its full proof, virtue adjudged the

the prize, and immortal bliss was the reward of the conquerors. The sons disdained not the combat, and the mother embraced the conflict. The tyrant was their adversary, the world the spectators, and religion the victor. Who could have beheld, who can hear of this glorious enterprise, without paying the tribute of praise and astonishment? The tyrant and his abettors were amazed at that patience and fortitude which supported the sufferers; and, inhuman as they were, revered that piety they could not subdue.

To what has been said on this melancholy subject, we shall add some farther exhortations made by the heroic mother to her sons at the time they were about to suffer. "Reflect (said she) on the conduct of your mother, who long lived a pure virgin. I wandered not from my father's house, nor did the serpent, which tempted Eve, seduce me. In conjugal fidelity to your father I passed the prime of my life. This father died, happy in the general esteem, when you had attained the years of maturity. He was blessed in his children, and happily missed the wretchedness of seeing them torn from him. During his life great pains were taken in your religious educations, to furnish you with principles proper to sustain this important trial. The law and prophets were taught you by him, who described the examples of their patience and virtue. He told you of Abel, who was murdered by his brother Cain; of Isaac, who was intended for a burnt-offering; of Joseph imprisoned for his chastity, and of the zeal of Phineas for the law of God. He often reminded you of that Providence by which God protects his people, and which is thus

celebrated by Isaiah: "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and when through the rivers they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." While children he taught you the song of David, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of them all." He instructed you in that maxim of Solomon, which intimates that wisdom is a tree of life to them that retain it. He quickened your faith by that of Ezekiel, hinting that the dry bones should live; and taught you the song of Moses, who (speaking in a Divine character) says, "I kill, and I make alive;" and who, in pronouncing the law, says, "Through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it."

O glorious, rather than melancholy, day, when the barbarous Antiochus kindled his flames, and, with more than savage rage, heated his cauldrons, and bound to the torture the seven children of this daughter of Abraham! When he tore out their tongues, and put out their eyes with the most malicious and wanton cruelty! The justice of God, however, did, (as will hereafter appear) and always will, punish the authors of such barbarities. But the tyranny and cruelty of this monster were only the means of removing these pious sons and their mother from a mortal life to a state of bliss eternal: they were, no doubt, after their sufferings in this life, admitted into the company of their righteous forefathers, and their souls received by the Almighty, to whom they trusted them, into a pure and immortal state. To that God be given all honour and praise, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

C H A P. XII.

The Jews are relieved from their persecutions under Antiochus Epiphanes by means of Mattathias, the chief of the family of the Maccabees. He puts to death an apostate Jew, kills Apelles, one of Antiochus's generals, and takes up arms in defence of his religion and country. He destroys all idolatrous worship, and, after having acted the parts of a good man, and a brave general, dies, and appoints Judas Maccabeus his successor. Judas engages Apollonius, the governor of Samaria, whom he defeats and kills. He overcomes the army of Antiochus in several engagements, makes himself master of the whole country of Judea, and purifies the temple of Jerusalem. Antiochus Epiphanes dies a miserable death, and is succeeded by his son Antiochus Eupater, who, being a minor, is kept for some time under the tuition of Lysias, the chief governor of Syria. Judas Maccabeus, and his brother Jonathan, perform many singular acts of valour. Their brother Joseph is defeated by the Syrians at Jamnia. Judas makes a peace with Antiochus Eupater, which being soon broke by the people of Joppa, Judas revenges the insult. He engages Timotheus, whom he vanquishes, and returns in triumph to Jerusalem. He lays siege to the fortress of Acra, foils Antiochus's army, and his brother Eleazar kills the royal elephant. Judas is besieged in Jerusalem, but is happily relieved by an unexpected incident. The miserable death of Menelaus the high-priest of Jerusalem.

THE poor Jews laboured, for a considerable time, under the most inexpressible persecutions from the cruel Antiochus, till at length they were rescued, under the Divine Providence, by means of the gallant family of the Macca-

bees. The chief of these was Mattathias, a priest, the son of John, the son of Simeon, the son of Asimonæus (from whom the family received the name of Asimoneans) who, with his five sons, John, Simon, Judas, Eleazar and Jonathan,

Jonathan, fled from Jerusalem, and took up their residence in Modin, a small place belonging to the tribe of Dan, in the mountains of Media.

Mattathias and his sons continued in this retreat for some time, bemoaning the hard fate of their religion and country. But at length the tyrant's restless malice found them out, upon which he dispatched Apelles, one of his military officers, with a body of soldiers, to oblige them, as well as all the rest who resided in that part of the country, to renounce their religion, and to sacrifice and burn incense in honour of the Grecian idols.

When Apelles arrived at Modin, he immediately summoned the people together, told them the nature of his business, and represented the consequences that would ensue should they refuse to obey the king's commands. He more particularly addressed himself to Mattathias, telling him, that from his advanced years, it would best become him to set the example, which, there was no doubt, would have a proper influence on the rest. He at the same time promised him, that in case he followed his advice, he should be taken into the number of the king's friends, and be promoted to great honour and riches. Mattathias, with a loud voice, and in the hearing of all the people, told Apelles, that no consideration whatever should induce him, or any of his family, to forsake the law of their God; that the examples of those who had apostatized were no rule to him, nor the commands of the greatest monarch of any validity, when they were sent to oblige him to embrace idolatry.

While Mattathias was thus speaking he beheld a Jew of the place presenting himself at the heathen altar, in order to sacrifice according to the king's injunctions. Not being able to contain himself at so horrid a sight, he hastily ran to the apostate, and, with a zeal equal to that of Phineas, slew him with his own hand; after which, turning to the king's commissioner, he, with the assistance of his sons, and some others who were with them, dispatched him likewise, as also the guard that attended him. He then overturned the altars, pulled down the idols that were in the place, and, calling out to his countrymen, said, "Let him that loves his religion follow me."

Having said this Mattathias, (accompanied by his five sons, and great numbers of the people, who were encouraged, by his example, firmly to adhere to their religion) left Modin, and retired into the mountains, in order to make the best defence they could against the emissaries of the cruel Antiochus. The officers belonging to Antiochus, who were at Jerusalem; hearing of this, took a party of soldiers from the garrison, and pursued them, fully resolved either to reduce them to obedience, or make their lives pay for their obstinacy. The people who accompanied Mattathias, instead of keeping in one body, dispersed themselves in different parts, though at such a distance that, if occasion offered, they might be easily assembled together. The emissaries of Antiochus, knowing in what a scrupulous manner the Jews observed the sabbath, took advantage of it by attacking them on that day. This answered the purpose, for they not making

the least attempt to defend themselves, great numbers were killed, and the rest were obliged to save themselves by flying to Mattathias, who having a greater number with him than Antiochus's officers chose to attack, they retreated and returned to Jerusalem. Mattathias, however, and the chief of his followers, finding to what dangers they might be subject in consequence of their religious observance of the sabbath, made a decree (which was confirmed by all the priests and elders among them) that, whenever they were again attacked on the sabbath-day, it should be lawful for them to fight for their lives, and to defend themselves in the best manner they could; which rule the Jews ever after observed without the least remorse.

Mattathias continued in the mountains for some time, during which great numbers of the Jews resorted to him, many of whom were men of the most tried courage, and well experienced in military discipline. Encouraged by this, Mattathias, after forming the people into a small army, which he divided into a certain number of bodies, and appointed a leader over each, left the mountains, and going round the cities of Judah, pulled down the heathen altars, re-established the true worship, caused the children to be circumcised, cut off all apostates that fell in his way, and destroyed all, wherever he went, who endeavoured to establish the worship of idolatry.

Thus did Mattathias act the part of a good man, and a prudent general, for about the space of a year, when, finding from his great age and natural infirmities, his end approaching, he called together his five sons, and (according to Josephus) addressed them as follows: "My life is drawing to the close; but, ere I leave you, I charge you to be firm in the cause I have asserted. Remember my advice, and follow it. Maintain the laws and rights of your country, and, if possible, restore order to a nation almost buried in confusion: nor associate with those who have betrayed it. Disgrace not your father; but, despising all dangers, risk your lives when your country deserves it, and rest assured that a restoration to your former liberty will be the recompence that God will bestow. It is true that our bodies are mortal; but great actions immortalize our memories; and to such actions I would have you aspire. I most earnestly advise you to concord with each other, and consider how the abilities of each may best promote the interest of you all. For instance; Simon has a depth of judgment; let him be your counsellor. Judas is distinguished for his valour and military skill: appoint him your general. On the whole, attend to what you have in view, and rely on the support of all men of honour and virtue."

Mattathias, having concluded his address to his sons, dismissed them, with prayers to God that he would be pleased to grant them success in their attempts to relieve their countrymen from the cruel persecutions of their enemies. Soon after this the good old man paid the debt of nature, and was buried in the sepulchres of his forefathers at Modin, all the faithful of Israel

making great lamentation for the loss of so valuable a member.

After the death of Mattathias, his son Judas (surnamed Maccabeus) agreeable to his father's advice, and the unanimous approbation of his brethren, took upon himself the command of the forces, which office he soon gave sufficient proofs of his being able properly to discharge. The first thing he did was to go into the several cities of Judea (in the same manner his father had done) and destroy all the utensils and implements he could find which were used in idolatrous worship. He slew all the idolaters and apostate Jews that fell in his way, rescued the true worshippers of God from the hands of their oppressors, and, for their better security in future, fortified their towns, rebuilt their fortresses, and placed such garrisons in them as he thought sufficient to repel the force of the enemy.

These proceedings being made known to the Syrian court, Antiochus sent orders to Apollonius, his governor in Samaria, to raise what forces he could, and march immediately against Judas. Apollonius obeyed the king's orders, but his attempt, happily for the Jews, proved not only fruitless, but destructive. Judas, being apprised of his intentions, got his forces together, and prepared them, in the best manner he could, for battle, encouraging them to persevere in the opposition they were about to make, not only for the security of their own lives, but for the preservation of their descendants, and, above all, for their laws and religion.

Animated by this advice, the forces under Judas marched with great expedition to meet those under Apollonius; the consequence of which was that a desperate battle ensued, in which, by the distinguished intrepidity of the Jews, the Samaritan army was soon routed, great numbers killed, and the rest put to flight. The brave Judas finding Apollonius detached from his army, engaged him in single combat, and by his great courage and prowess, soon dispatched him, took away his sword, among other spoils, and, as a memento of this signal victory, generally made use of it in his future encounters.

The news of this defeat soon reached the ears of Seron, the deputy-governor of some part of Cœlo-Syria, who, in consequence thereof, and the farther information he had received that reinforcements were certainly going over to Judas, gathered together what forces were under his command, and resolved to give him battle. For this purpose he marched with his army as far as Bethron, a village in Judea, where he encamped his forces, and where he was joined by a great number of those renegade Jews, who had readily submitted to the injunction of Antiochus. In the mean time Judas made the necessary preparations to engage Seron, but finding his soldiers appeared discouraged from the superior number of the enemy, he endeavoured to remove their fears by addressing himself to them in words to this effect: "Brother soldiers, de-

pend not on yourselves, but on God, for victory: confidence in him is superior to that in multitudes of men. The history of our ancestors confirms this truth, who, with small numbers, have routed thousands in defence of their religion, freedom, laws, and families. Truth must prevail, and innocence shall remain unconquered." Having said this he led his people to the battle, in which they fought with such courage and resolution, that Seron, the general of the Syrian army, was soon killed, and his forces routed and put to flight, each man consulting only his own safety. The number of the enemy that fell in the battle was about eight thousand, and those who escaped fled for security into the country of the Philistines.

When Antiochus heard of these two defeats he was so enraged, that he vowed revenge on the Jews, to obtain which he raised a powerful army in Greece and other parts, being resolved to invade Judea the next spring. Finding, however, on examination, that his treasures fell very short of defraying the expences of so great an army (his tributes being much diminished by the frequent revolts and commotions in his own dominions) he thought it most prudent for himself first to make an expedition into Persia, and there to levy a tribute which might be sufficient to carry on the war against the Jews. But before he went on this expedition, he constituted his favourite Lysias governor of all the country from the Euphrates to Egypt, leaving with him one half of the forces, with orders, during his absence, to send an army into Judea, utterly to destroy the city of Jerusalem, to extirpate the Jews, and settle strangers in the country.

Antiochus, having adjusted these matters, set out for Persia, leaving Lysias to manage all public affairs during his absence. Lysias, the better to execute his master's commands, sent three eminent commanders (namely, Ptolemy-Macron, Nicanor and Gorgias) to manage the war against the Jews, who, with an army of 40,000 foot, and 7,000 horse, encamped at Emmaus*, a small village about eight miles from Jerusalem. During their stay here, their army was greatly increased by the additional troops of the Syrians, renegade Jews, and other neighbouring nations, with whom went several merchants to buy slaves, being thoroughly convinced in their minds that the Jews would be certainly defeated.

In the mean time Judas Maccabeus was far from being idle. Having gathered together what forces he could, he marched with them to Mizpeh (the city of Jerusalem being at this time in the hands of the heathens) where he encamped with a full resolution of giving the enemy battle. Here he made a long harangue to his people, telling them not to trust in their own strength, but to implore the protection of heaven by prayer and fasting, in which case there was not the least doubt but all their endeavours to

* This village lay to the west of Jerusalem, and was honoured with Our Saviour's presence after his resurrection. See Luke xxiv. 13. It contained many hot baths from whence it received its name; (the word Emmaus, which comes from

the Hebrew Chamath, signifying *baths of hot water*) and these were very beneficial to those who had occasion to use them.

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to oppose the enemy would be crowned with success. The people obeyed his directions, after which he divided them into regiments; troops and companies; and in order to animate them to persevere in the undertaking in which they had engaged, he addressed them in words to this effect: "My fellow soldiers and companions! We shall never again have such an opportunity of shewing our bravery in the defence of our country, and the contempt of all dangers, as we have now before us; for upon the issue of to-morrow's combat depends not only our liberty, but all the comforts and advantages that attend it; and, over and above the blessings of such a freedom, our very religion lies at stake with it too, and we cannot secure the one but by preserving the other. Bethink yourselves well therefore, what it is you are to contend for and you will find it to be no less than the firm and substance of the greatest happiness you ever enjoyed, that is to say, the peaceable possession of your antient laws, rites, and discipline. Now whether you will rather chuse to perish with infamy, and to involve the miserable remainder of your countrymen in the same ruin, or to venture one generous push for the redemption of yourselves and your friends, that's the question. Death is the same thing to the coward that it is to the valiant man, and as certain to the one as the other; but there is a great difference, in point of honour and everlasting fame, between a gallant man, who falls in vindication of his religion, liberties, laws, and country, and a scoundrel that abandons all for fear of losing a life which he cannot save at last. Take these things into your thoughts and make this use of the meditation. You have nothing to trust to but God's Providence, and your encouraging resolutions, and, at the worst, while we contend for victory, we can never fail of glory." This speech had the desired effect, the people unanimously declaring they would part with the last drop of their blood in defence of their religion and country.

Judas, soon after this, understanding that Gorgias was detached from the combined army with five thousand foot, and a thousand horse, in order to surprize his camp by night, resolved to be before-hand with him, and to countermine his plot, by another of the like kind. He therefore quitted his camp, and marching a round about way to that of the enemy, he fell upon them (while Gorgias, with a part of his forces were absent) so unexpectedly and with such resolution that they were thrown into the utmost disorder. They at first made what attempts they were able to defend themselves, but they were soon defeated, and three thousand slain on the spot. The rest were glad to save themselves by a precipitate flight, leaving Judas and his gallant troops masters of their camp.

In the mean time Gorgias arriving at the Jewish camp, and finding it empty, concluded from thence that Judas had fled into the mountains for fear, and therefore went thither in pursuit of him. After searching some time in vain, he turned back, and marched towards his own camp,

in the way to which he was informed that it had been entered and burnt; that the main army was broken and fled; and that Judas was ready in the plains to give him a warm reception. This intelligence had such an effect on Gorgias's troops, that they threw down their arms and fled, which being observed by Judas he immediately pursued them; and killed great numbers; so that the whole amounted to about nine thousand. Returning, with his victorious army, from the pursuit, he entered the enemy's camp, where he found abundance of rich plunder, which, as an encouragement to the troops, he divided amongst them; and the next day (which was the sabbath) he kept with great devotion, rejoicing and praising God for assisting them in conquering their enemies.

A few days after this, Judas, having received intelligence that Timotheus, governor of the country beyond Jordan, and Bacchides, another officer in those parts, were drawing forces together in order to attack him, he marched directly against them; and such was his success in this enterprize that he totally defeated the enemy, slew above twenty thousand, and obliged the rest to save themselves by a precipitate flight. This conquest was of the most singular advantage to Judas, his troops being furnished with a great abundance of warlike instruments, and other things necessary for prosecuting the war, which the enemy, to save themselves, were glad to leave behind.

The great success of Judas so mortified Lysias (whom Antiochus, when he went upon his expedition into Persia had constituted chief governor of all the country from the Euphrates to Egypt) that the next year he entered Judea with an army of sixty thousand foot and five thousand horse, and encamped at Bethsura, a strong place lying to the south of Jerusalem, near the confines of Idumæa. Judas, undismayed by the superior number of the enemy, advanced against them with only ten thousand men, and having offered up prayers for success, he attacked the enemy, forced their lines, and killed upwards of five thousand on the spot. The army of Lysias was so irritated at this disaster, that they told their commander they were determined either to conquer or die; but Lysias, considering this only as a mark of despair, instead of continuing the battle, sounded a retreat, and withdrew his forces to Antioch, in hopes, by making a considerable addition to them, of being successful at some future period.

Animated by these successes, Judas, after encouraging his adherents to rely on the continued protection of God, proposed marching to Jerusalem, and attempting once more to possess themselves of their antient city, and, should their endeavours be crowned with success, to offer up sacrifices, and cleanse the temple, so that they might again restore the worship of the God of Israel. This proposition being readily and cheerfully agreed to, he immediately marched against Jerusalem, whither he had no sooner arrived than the heathens (being intimidated at the astonishing conquests already obtained by Judas) deserted the place, suffering him and his men to enter it without the least interruption.

When Judas entered the city he found the gates

gates destroyed, the temple abandoned, and weeds overspreading the courts; so that they wept at the deplorable situation of the place. He immediately ordered his people to cleanse it, and to purge it of those profanations with which, for some time, it had been defiled. This being done, he furnished it with utensils, vessels, a candlestick, a table, and an altar of incense, all of pure gold. He likewise made new doors to it, and put up veils and hangings on the walls. The altar, which had been profaned by sacrifices and burnt-offerings to idols, was also removed, and a new one, of unhewn stone, (agreeable to the directions of Moses) placed in its stead, lighted tapers were put in the candlestick, incense offered on the altar, shew-bread placed on the table, and burnt-offerings made, on the fifth of the month Chisleu (which answers to about the twentieth of our November) just three-years after the temple had been profaned by the cruel and abandoned Antiochus. Judas continued this festival eight days, with sacrifices, rejoicing and feasting, while the air resounded with thank-givings and praises from the people, who, during the whole time, were indulged in all reasonable gratifications. The public joy was so great on this restoration of their law and religion, that an anniversary of eight days celebration was appointed to be held ever after. This festival was called *The Feast of Lights*, in allusion to that light which Providence was pleased once more to bestow on the children of Israel.

At the time Apollonius made himself master of Jerusalem, in order the better to secure the place, he erected a fortress on Mount Acra, a remarkable eminence situated on the north side of the temple. This fortress (which was still occupied by the heathens) commanding one of the principal ways that led to the city, the enemy took advantage of it by annoying all those who went that way to attend Divine service. Judas immediately set about means to remove this inconvenience, which he did by first blocking up the fortress; but finding he could not conveniently spare such a number of men as was necessary for that purpose, he caused the outer part of the temple to be fortified with strong walls and high towers, in which he placed a sufficient garrison both to defend it, and protect those who went up to worship.

No sooner did the neighbouring nations understand that the Jews had recovered the city and temple of Jerusalem, and restored the true worship of God, than their hatred was raised to the most violent degree against them, and they resolved, if possible, by forming a general confederacy, to extirpate the whole Jewish nation. As soon as Judas was apprized of their intentions, he took every means he could project for rendering their designs abortive. He well knew the Idumæans were the most bitter enemies to the Jews, and therefore as a guard against them, he first fortified Bethsura, after which he not only declared war against them, but likewise all the other nations that had confederated together; and such was his success, (as will hereafter appear) that in most of the engagements that took place between him and the enemy the latter were defeated with great loss, and their efforts to reduce the Jews rendered ineffectual.

During these transactions Antiochus was employed in his expedition into Persia, in order to raise money for carrying on the war against the Jews. This expedition, however, instead of being attended with success, proved his bane, and robbed him of that life, which, from his natural cruelty and baseness of heart, was of little value. Having received information that in the city of Elymais (a very opulent place in that part of the country called Antient Persia) was a temple that contained immense riches, he marched thither with his army, with a resolution of not only plundering the temple, but likewise the most wealthy inhabitants of the city. The people of the adjoining country having received intimation of Antiochus's intentions, immediately gathered from all parts, and joining those of the city, met Antiochus, whom they attacked with such success, that he was glad to desist from attempting to execute his design, and retreated with his army to Ecbatane in Media.

While Antiochus was at Ecbatane, he received intelligence of the ill success of his arms in Judea, and of the Jews having possessed themselves of the city of Jerusalem, destroying the altars and images he had erected, and restoring the original worship in the temple. Irritated at this information he immediately left Media, and hastened towards home, with a determined resolution totally to extirpate the whole nation. But no sooner had he formed this barbarous resolution and was hastening with all speed to execute it, than the judgments of God overtook him, he being suddenly seized with such violent and racking pains in all his inward parts that it was out of the power of medicine to give him the least relief.

Notwithstanding the great torments Antiochus underwent from this affliction, yet it did not interrupt him from his intentions of persecuting the Jews: he still vowed the most bitter revenge against them, and was still resolved to carry his designs into execution. For this purpose he ordered his charioteer to double his speed, which he accordingly did; but, by the rapidity of the motion the chariot was overturned, and Antiochus received so much hurt from the fall, that he was unable to proceed any farther, and therefore stopped at Tabæ, a little town on the confines of Persia.

While Antiochus was at Tabæ he suffered the most exquisite torments that can be conceived, not only in his body, but likewise his mind. A most nauseous and filthy ulcer broke out in his private parts, from whence continually flowed an innumerable quantity of vermin, and the stench proceeding from it was so great that neither those who attended him, nor even himself could well bear; and in this condition did he lie languishing and rotting till he died. The torments of his mind were no less perplexing than those of his body. When, through mere fatigue, he was somewhat inclined to rest, he was sure to be interrupted by the appearance of spectres and apparitions, whom he imagined reproached and stung his conscience with accusations of the evil deeds of which he had been guilty. Being at length made sensible, by the severity of his afflictions, that they were all directed by the hand of God as a punishment for his

his plundering and profaning the temple at Jerusalem, and for his hatred and cruelty to the Jews who worshipped there, he made an ample confession of his crimes; with many solemn promises of his future amendment should he recover. But this repentance came too late; and therefore, after having languished for some time in this wretched and deplorable condition, and under these horrid torments both of body and mind, he at length, being half consumed with the rottenness of his ulcer, gave up the ghost, after an inglorious reign of eleven years. His body was removed from Tabæ to Antioch, and there interred in the sepulchre of his ancestors.

Thus died the cruel and wicked Antiochus Epiphanes, and thus was fulfilled the prediction of the innocent Solomona and her seven sons, who, during their sufferings, had threatened, or rather foretold, that, *through the judgment of God he should receive a just punishment for his pride; and that when he should call upon God in his distress, he would not answer.*

On the death of Antiochus Epiphanes his son Antiochus Eupater succeeded to the Syrian throne, at which time he was nine years of age. His father, a short time before his death, had appointed a confidential friend, named Philip, (who was then with him at Tabæ) to be regent of the kingdom during his son's minority, and had given him a strict charge to see him educated in such a manner, that he might be able, as soon as possible, to take the government into his own hands.

Philip faithfully promised to pay a strict attention to the commands of his dying master; and for that purpose, immediately after his death, repaired to Antioch. But on his arrival there he found his office usurped by another; for Lysias (whom the king had left governor in chief during his absence) having heard of the death of Epiphanes, placed his son Antiochus (who was then immediately under his protection) on the throne, and assumed to himself the tuition of his person and government of his kingdom, which he determined to preserve in opposition to the will of the late king in favour of Philip. The latter, knowing himself too weak to engage in a contest with Lysias, gave up his claim, and retired into Egypt, not without some hopes that a future opportunity would present itself when he might be enabled to obtain that right of which he was now divested by a superiority of power.

The Jews reaped little advantage by the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, for his son and successor, by the direction of Lysias, resolved to carry on the war against them with great severity. In this he was materially assisted by the confederate nations that had threatened to extirpate the whole race of Israel, and who had begun to execute their design by putting to death great numbers of the Jews in different parts.

As soon as Judas Maccabeus heard that the people of the different nations round Judea had commenced their intended persecution of the Jews, he resolved to take all possible measures to stop their proceedings. For this purpose he first marched against the Idumeans (whom he

knew to be the most forward in the conspiracy) and having entered that part of their country called Acrabatena, immediately fell on them; and was so successful that, in two different battles, no less than 40,000 were slain on the spot, and the rest obliged to save themselves by a hasty retreat into the more interior parts of the country.

Animated by this success Judas passed the river Jordan, and went into the land of the Ammonites, where he defeated those people in several engagements, slew great numbers of them; took several principal places (particularly a large town called Johazar, situated at the foot of the mountains of Gilead) and then returned, with his victorious army, in triumph to Jerusalem.

As soon as Lysias heard of the great success of Judas Maccabeus, he sent his general Timotheus, with a very considerable army, to take possession of Judea. Judas, being apprized of this, immediately left Jerusalem, and marched with his forces to give him battle. No sooner were the two armies met than an engagement took place, in which the troops of Judas, though greatly inferior in number to those under Timotheus, acted with such bravery and resolution, that the Syrian army was totally defeated, no less than 20,500 foot, and 600 horse, being slain on the spot. Timotheus was reduced to the necessity of flying for safety to Gazara, a city in the tribe of Ephraim, of which his brother Chereas was governor. Thither Judas pursued him, and laying siege to the place, at the expiration of five days, made himself master of it. Timotheus, to avoid being taken, concealed himself in a ditch, but being discovered by some of Judas's troops, and taken out of it, he was, with his brother Chereas, and one Apolophanes, a captain of the Syrian forces, put to death; after which Judas having placed a proper garrison in the city, returned to Jerusalem.

During these transactions, the heathen nations about Galaad fell upon those Jews who resided in the land of Tob, which lay to the east of Gilead. They slew no less than one thousand men, took all their goods as spoil, and carried away their wives and children into captivity. In consequence of this most of those Jews, who resided in the adjoining parts, quitted their habitations, and, for safety, retired to a strong fortress in Gilead called Dothema, with a resolution of defending themselves against the enemy, or perishing in the attempt. As soon as the heathens understood this they immediately assembled together, and placed themselves under the command of Timotheus (the successor, and most probably the son of Timotheus who was slain at Gazara) in order to besiege them; while the inhabitants of Tyer, Sidon, Ptolemais, and other parts, were laying schemes for destroying all the Jews who resided in the country of Galilee.

The poor Jews, in these different parts, being in the most imminent danger, respectively sent messengers to Judas Maccabeus, requesting him to come with all expedition to their assistance, as they must otherwise inevitably perish by the hands of their implacable enemies. Judas, not

knowing how to act in this critical juncture of affairs, consulted the Sanhedrim*, or general council of the nation, and by their advice, divided his army into three parties. With the first, which consisted of eight thousand men, he, accompanied by his brother Jonathan, marched for the relief of the Gileadites. His brother Simon, who was appointed to the command of the second division, which consisted of three thousand, was sent into Galilee; and the rest were left at Jerusalem, under the command of Joseph, for the defence of the city and its environs. Judas, before he left Jerusalem, gave a strict charge to his brother Joseph not to attempt any enterprize against the enemy, but to stand wholly on the defensive till he and his brother Jonathan should return from their expedition.

When Judas and his brother Jonathan arrived in the land of Gilead they received intelligence that a great number of Jews were imprisoned at Bassora, a town belonging to the Edomites, and that it was the intention of the enemy to put them to death as soon as they should possess themselves of the fortress of Dothema, where many other Jews had fled to secure themselves from the common danger. In consequence of this information Judas marched with

all expedition to Bassora, and arriving there sooner than was expected, fell upon the enemy before they could have time to make any kind of defence. He slew all the males, and took all their spoils, having done which he released the distressed Jews, set the town on fire, and then marched towards Dothema. On his arrival there, which was early in the morning, (having marched his forces all night) he found Timotheus had already begun to storm the place; upon which he immediately attacked him with all his forces and that with such success that the Syrians were totally routed, and no less than eight thousand slain on the spot. Judas, after returning from the pursuit of the enemy, set his brethren at liberty, and then marched his army from place to place where he understood that a great number of Jews were imprisoned, whom he released and treated their persecutors in the same manner he had done those of Bassora. Having thus reduced the principal places in Gilead, and rescued a great number of his brethren, who must otherwise have fallen victims to the malice and rage of the enemy, he returned with his victorious army in triumph to Jerusalem.

When Judas and his brother Jonathan arrived at

* The Sanhedrim, or general council of the Jewish nation, consisted of seventy senators, who assembled together, at fixed times, in order to determine the most important affairs of their church and state. The high-priest was the settled president, and for that reason called Nasi, or prince of the Sanhedrim: in his absence there was a deputy called Abbeth-din, which signifies *Father of the House of Judgment*; as also a sub-deputy called Chacam, i. e. *the Wise*; but all the rest had the common name of Elders or Senators.

These senators were taken partly from among the priests and Levites, and partly out of the number of the inferior judges, who formed what they called the Lesser Sanhedrim. They were all to be men of untainted birth, good learning, and profound knowledge in the law, both written and traditional. All eunuchs, and such as had any bodily deformity, were excluded from the Sanhedrim; as also usurers, gamesters, and such as made a gain of their fruits in the sabbatical year. In short, those only were to be admitted members of this council, who were of mature age, had competent fortunes, and were comely in their persons.

The room in which this council met was a rotunda, half of which was built without the temple, and half within. The Nasi, or prince of the council, sat upon a throne, elevated above the rest, at the upper end of the room, having his deputy on his right-hand, and his sub deputy on the left. The senators were ranged in order on each side, and by them sat the secretaries, who were three in number. One of these secretaries kept a register of such as were absolved, the second had the care of those who were condemned to die, and the third registered the several pleadings of all contending parties.

The authority of the great Sanhedrim was very extensive. The council decided all causes brought before them by way of appeal from the inferior courts. The right of judging, in capital cases, belonged to this court only, nor could sentence of death be pronounced in any other place. In short, all private controversies of difficult discussion, all matters relating to religion, and all important affairs of state, were submitted to the determination of this august assembly, from whose sentence no appeal could be made.

The formality to be observed in bringing a law-suit before the Sanhedrim is thus described by Maimonides: "The business (says he) was first to be examined in the inferior courts; but if it could not be decided there, the judges sent to Jerusalem to consult the Judgment Chamber that sat upon the mount of the temple. From this tribunal they proceeded to that which sat at the temple-gate; and, if the matter was not determined there, they came at last to the Great Council-Chamber, which was held in one of the apartments belonging to the temple; and this

"last council determined with so much justice and authority, that there were no divisions seen during all the time that the sacred temple lasted."

According to the Jewish Doctors great caution was taken by this tribunal in passing the sentence of death upon criminals; and such was the lenity used by them that, even after condemnation, if any circumstances appeared favourable in behalf of the culprit, he escaped the punishment allotted him. The manner in which they describe the nature of these proceedings is as follows: "After the witnesses were heard (say they) and the matter in question decided, the judge put off the sentence till the next morning. The members of the Sanhedrim then went home, eat but little, drank no wine, and met again, two and two, in order to weigh all the particulars of the trial. The next morning he that had given his opinion for condemning of the criminal had power to revoke it, but he who had once given his opinion for absolving him, could not alter his mind. As soon as the judge had pronounced sentence, the malefactor was conducted to the place of execution, while an herald on horseback proclaimed as he went along, "Such an one is condemned for such a crime; but if any one can say any thing in his behalf, let him now speak." If it happened that any one came to the gate of the court of the temple, the door-keeper gave intimation to the herald to bring back the prisoner, while two judges were appointed to hear what his friend had to say in his behalf, and to consider whether there was any thing material in it. If there was, the criminal was set at liberty, but if not he underwent the sentence that had been pronounced against him."

It has been a matter of great controversy among the learned at what time this Sanhedrim, or Great Council of the Jewish nation, was first instituted, some of the Jewish Doctors tracing it as far back as the time of Moses. But on a circumspet view of the arguments on both sides the question it evidently appears not to have commenced till the time of the Maccabees, and that either Judas or his brother Jonathan was the institutor of it. The most substantial authority for this supposition is that there are not any footsteps to be found, either in sacred or profane history, of such an assembly previous to the time of the Maccabees, when we read of it as being the Senate of the Nation, and that it grew into great power, which it preserved many years after. It was the highest court during Our Saviour's ministry, and matters of the highest importance were committed to their determination. In this state it continued for some time after, till at length, by the final destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jewish nation, the very name and authority of that senate, was, in a short time, entirely lost.

at Jerusalem, they received a very disagreeable piece of intelligence, which arose from the misconduct of Joseph, who had been left there with the remainder of the army to secure the place. Hearing of the great successes of his brothers in Gilead, and animated thereat, he, contrary to the orders that had been given him, led forth his forces on an ill-projected expedition against Jamnia, a sea-port on the Mediterranean, thinking to take the place. But Gorgias, who commanded in those parts for the king of Syria, and who had under him a very considerable army, attacked Joseph so forcibly that his troops were thrown into the utmost disorder, two thousand were killed on the spot, and he, with the rest, obliged to save themselves by flight, and return with all expedition to Jerusalem.

In the meantime Simon was no less successful in Galilee than his brothers Judas and Jonathan had been in Gilead. He defeated the enemy in several encounters, drove them out of the country, and pursued them with great slaughter as far as the very gates of Ptolemais. In his way to, and at all the places he reduced, he gathered together the Jews, men, women and children, whom, on his return, he left in different parts of Judea, to occupy those places which had been desolated by the enemy, during the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes.

When Lysias (the chief commander of the Syrian forces, and at this time regent of the kingdom) heard of the great success of Judas and his brothers Jonathan and Simon, he vowed revenge against the Jews, and immediately raising an army of eighty thousand men, marched towards Jerusalem, in order to give Judas battle, and, if possible, make himself master of the city. In his way thither, coming to Bethsura, he thought it necessary to take that place first, and therefore laid siege to it; but while he was on this business Judas (who had heard of his intentions and situation) marched against him, and immediately attacking his army killed no less than eleven thousand foot, sixteen hundred horse, and put the rest to flight. Lysias, with great difficulty, escaped to Antioch, from whence, considering the distracted state of his affairs, and despairing of being able to raise fresh recruits, he sent terms of accommodation to Judas and his people. By these terms, which were readily accepted, the decree of Antiochus Epiphanes, obliging the Jews to conform to the customs and maxims of the Greeks was rescinded, and the Jews were permitted to live according to their own laws and religion.

This peace, however, was of very short duration, for though it received the royal sanction, being ratified by Antiochus himself, yet it was greatly disapproved of by the governors of the several neighbouring places round Antioch. The people about Joppa were the first that broke it, by drowning in the sea two hundred of the Jews who lived among them in that city. As soon as Judas heard of this cruelty and perfidy, he executed a severe revenge, for falling on them by night, he destroyed their shipping, and such as escaped the fire he put to the sword. Hearing likewise that the people of Joppa had very ill treated the Jews in that place, he set fire to the town, and not a single ship that then lay there escaped the flames.

Among those governors who were dissatisfied with the peace made between Lysias and the Jews, was Timotheus, who was so irritated that he assembled together an army of 120,000 foot and 2,500 horse, with a resolution of going into Gilead, and destroying all the Jews who resided in that country. Judas, being informed of the design of Timotheus immediately marched against him, and having defeated a strong party of wandering Arabs in his way and made peace with them, he first laid siege to the city of Caspis (which was formerly called Hesbon, and belonged to the tribe of Reuben) and soon making himself master of it, slew the inhabitants and reduced the place to ashes. From thence he proceeded to Caraca, where Timotheus had left a garrison of ten thousand men, and having proved equally successful there, he put all to the sword. At length he came up with Timotheus at a place called Raphon, and immediately giving him battle, slew thirty thousand men, and took him prisoner. He, however, gave him both his life and liberty on these conditions, namely, that he should immediately release all the Jews, who were captives in any places under his jurisdiction. Judas, understanding that the forces of Timotheus who had fled for safety had taken shelter in Carnion, a city in Arabia, he pursued them thither, and having soon made himself master of the place, slew no less than 25,000, so that Timotheus was totally disabled from making any farther attempts against the Jews in any of those parts of the country over which he had the command.

In this expedition Judas exercised the like good policy his brother Simon had done after his conquests in Galilee. All the Jews whom he rescued from the hands of the enemy he took with him, and on his return into the land of Judea, left them to inhabit and fortify such cities as were not already sufficiently peopled. Judas, on his return home, was obliged to pass through Ephron, a large city in the hands of Lysias, and defended by a very strong garrison. On his arrival there the people refused to open the gates, upon which he immediately assaulted the place, and having, in a short time, taken it by storm, he put all the males, amounting to about 25,000, to the sword, took their spoils, and reduced the city to ashes.

Encouraged by these repeated successes, Judas resolved to carry the war into the Southern parts of Idumea, and therefore marched with his army into that part of the country. The first place of which he possessed himself in this expedition was Hebron, the metropolis, from whence he went into the land of the Philistines, and laid siege to Azotus, formerly called Ashdod.

The inhabitants stood out for some time, but were at length reduced; and great numbers of them put to the sword; after which Judas pulled down all the heathen altars, burnt their carved images, and totally demolished the place. Having done the like to all the other cities in that part of the country of which he had made himself master, he returned to Jerusalem, his victorious army being laden with abundance of rich spoils which they had taken from the enemy.

But notwithstanding these great successes, yet Judas could not, strictly speaking, yet call himself master of Jerusalem. The citadel, or fortress
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of Acra, still held out for the king of Syria, and the garrison, which consisted of Macedonians and renegade Jews, was very troublesome to such as resorted to the temple. To remove these inconveniences Judas thought it adviseable to attempt the reduction of the place: He therefore having prepared proper engines and machines for the better executing his design, forcibly attacked it and proved so successful as greatly to straiten the enemy, though he could not so far reduce them as to make himself master of the place.

In the mean time the besieged found means to inform king Antiochus of their distress, and to request that he would either immediately come himself, or send some proper person, to their assistance. Antiochus faithfully promised to relieve them himself, and for that purpose raised a very powerful army, consisting of 110,000 foot, 20,000 horse, 3000 armed chariots, and thirty-two elephants with castles on their backs full of archers.

With this formidable army Antiochus marched to the relief of the fortrefs of Acra, in his way to which he laid siege to Bethsura, not doubting but he should easily reduce the inhabitants to obedience. In this first enterprize, however, he found himself greatly mistaken, for the people, being resolute, defeated all his efforts, and burnt and destroyed his battering engines, so that he spent a great deal of time to very little purpose.

While Antiochus was before Bethsura Judas was pressing the siege of Acra with all his might; but being fearful lest the Bethsurians should be forced to submit to the superior force of the enemy, he relinquished the siege, and marched with his army to their assistance. His intent was, to surprize the king's forces, and therefore marching in the night he fell upon one quarter of the enemy in the dark, killed four thousand and then retreated without sustaining any loss.

Early the next morning Antiochus left Bethsura, and having marched within sight of Judas's army encamped near a place called Bethzachariah. Here he directed his troops to arrange themselves in proper order for battle; but the narrowness of the place obliged them to go in files, one elephant preceding a thousand foot and five hundred horse; while the other troops ascended the hills under the command of officers of the most experienced valour. When they came to the open part where Judas's army was encamped, and which was on an eminence, they began the attack with the loudest acclamations, so that the vallies re-echoed with the noise. This, however, did not in the least intimidate Judas and his men, who immediately fell with great fierceness on the enemy, and at the first attack killed six hundred of the king's best troops. During the engagement Eleazar (a brother of Judas) observing one of the elephants more richly caparisoned than the rest, and presuming it was the king who rode the beast, resolved to make one bold stroke, by which he might not only deliver his country, but gain to himself immortal honour. To effect this he forced himself through the guards, killed several of his opponents, and getting under the king's elephant struck his spear into its belly, so that the creature fell down dead, which proved fatal to Eleazar, for before he could get from

under the beast he dropped, and crushed him to death.

Judas, however, finding the number too great for him, withdrew from the fight, and made a safe retreat to Jerusalem. Antiochus followed with one part of his army, leaving the other to carry on the siege of Bethsura, the inhabitants of which, seeing no prospect of relief from their friends, were at length forced to surrender, but on condition that they should not be treated with any violence. The general of Antiochus's forces agreed to this, and preserved his engagement, as far as saving their lives, but he drove them naked from the town, and placed some of his own people in their stead.

The king's forces having reduced Bethsura marched towards Jerusalem, in order to join the party under Antiochus, and assist him in the reduction of that city. When the whole army appeared before the place, Judas was alarmed from the great superiority of their number, and as the most proper place of security, retired with his friends into the temple. They obstinately defended the place for some time, and counter-worked every attack made by the enemy; but the people were greatly distressed for want of bread. It happened to be the time when the Jews by their laws, could neither plow nor sow; so that in this distress many people abandoned the place for want of provisions, and the rest must have inevitably been compelled to surrender had they not been relieved by the following very fortunate and unexpected incident.

While Antiochus, and Lysias his general, were carrying on the siege of Jerusalem, they received advice that Philip (whom Antiochus Epiphanes had constituted regent of the kingdom, and guardian to his son) had made himself master of Antioch, and taken upon him the government of the Syrian empire. In consequence of this information the king and Lysias unanimously resolved to abandon the siege, and march with all expedition to attack Philip. The king, however, thought it adviseable to keep their intentions so secret, that neither officers nor soldiers should be able to form an idea of their design; to effect which the king bade Lysias represent to them the great strength of the place, and how tedious a business it would be to take it: that corn grew scarce; that the king was wanted in another place, and the best way would be to yield the people the use of their religion and laws, which being all they contended for, the king might depart at his pleasure.

This proposal being universally approved of by the army, Antiochus sent a messenger to offer peace to the besieged on the most honourable terms, which being accepted, they left the temple, and the accommodation between them was ratified by oath. But when Antiochus came to see the strength of the fortifications belonging to the temple, he (contrary to the articles he had sworn to) caused them to be all pulled down and demolished; after which he set out on his return to Syria. On his arrival at Antioch he found the information he had received at Jerusalem but too true, Philip having possessed himself of the imperial city, and assumed the government. He immediately attacked him with all

all his forces, and in a short time totally routed his army, slew great numbers of his men, and put the rest to flight. Philip himself fell among the slain; so that Antiochus, having now no other opponent, he easily re-possessed himself in the government of the empire.

While Antiochus and Lyfias were carrying on the siege of Jerusalem, Menelaus, the high-priest, was very busy in offering his services against his own people, and even went so far as to offer up prayers for the success of Antiochus's army. But Lyfias, discovering his hypocrisy,

cautioned the king against his villainous designs and practices, and accused him of being the author and fomentor of the Jewish war. In consequence of this accusation Menelaus was seized, and being condemned to die, he was carried to Berhæa, a town in Syria, where he was thrown headlong from the top of a high tower, and dashed to pieces. After his death Antiochus conferred the office of high-priest on one Alcimus, a man no less depraved in principles than the wicked Menelaus.

C H A P. XIII.

Demetrius, the nephew of the late Antiochus Epiphanes, claims the crown of Syria, which he obtains, and orders Antiochus Eupater and the regent Lyfias, to be put to death. Alcimus, the high-priest, represents the Jews in a very unfavourable light to Demetrius, who thereupon sends Bacchides, the governor of Mesopotamia, with an army into Judea, in order to carry on the war against them. The perfidy and cruelty of Alcimus the high-priest to his brethren. Bacchides returns to Antioch, and leaves Alcimus commander of his forces against the Jews. Judas Maccabeus obliges Alcimus to leave Judea, and fly to Antioch, upon which Demetrius sends another army into Judea under the command of Nicanor, with strict orders to destroy Judas and his followers. Nicanor enters into a treaty of peace with the Jews, which is rendered ineffectual by the baseness of Alcimus. Nicanor marches against Jerusalem, but is attacked by Judas, his army defeated, and himself slain. Judas enters into a league of friendship with the Romans. He engages the army of the Syrians under the command of Bacchides and Alcimus, from the superiority of whose numbers he is defeated and slain. His brother Jonathan succeeds him in the command of the Jewish forces, makes a brave stand, and afterwards forms a treaty of peace with Bacchides. Alexander, the son of Antiochus Epiphanes, usurps the kingdom of Syria, in which he is joined by Jonathan, who, among other favours bestowed on him by Alexander, is appointed to the office of high-priest. Alexander engages the army of Demetrius, obtains a complete victory, and kills his antagonist. The son of Demetrius endeavours to revenge his father's death, and to divest Alexander of the Syrian throne. He gains over to his interest Apollonius, the governor of Cælo-Syria, who, to oblige Jonathan to quit Alexander's party, marches against him with a considerable army. Jonathan engages him, and obtains a complete victory. Alexander, in conjunction with Ammonius his favourite, concert a plot against the life of his father-in-law Ptolemy Philometer, which proves abortive. Ptolemy engages Alexander, defeats his army, and obliges him to fly into Arabia, where Zabdiel the king of that part of the country, cuts off his head and sends it to Ptolemy. Ptolemy dies of the wounds he received in the battle with Alexander, and Demetrius obtains quiet possession of the Syrian empire.

AFTER Antiochus Eupater had for some time, been on the throne of Syria, Demetrius, the son of Seleucus Philopater (elder brother to Antiochus Epiphanes) laid claim to the crown. In the very year that Antiochus, the uncle of Demetrius died, he was defeated in a pitched battle by the Romans, and taken prisoner, upon which his nephew Demetrius, who happened to be with him, and was then a child, was, to secure his uncle's liberty, sent as an hostage to Rome; and in consequence of his absence at the time of his uncle's death, Antiochus Eupater was declared king without the least opposition.

Demetrius was now in the twenty-third year of his age, and thinking that Antiochus Eupater possessed that dignity to which himself was entitled, he determined to put in his claim, and, if possible, make himself master of the

Syrian empire. The first step he took towards effecting his design was, to apply to the Senate of Rome for their assistance, and as an inducement to their granting his request, he told them, that, having been bred up in that city from his childhood, he should always look on Rome as his country, the senators as his fathers, and their sons as his brothers. This, however, had not the desired effect, for the Senate, paying a greater regard to their own interest than the claim of Demetrius, and judging it more advantageous to them to have a boy reign in Syria (as Antiochus Eupater then was) than a man of mature understanding and discernment (as they knew Demetrius to be) refused to give him any assistance, notwithstanding the pretensions he made of being justly entitled to the sovereignty of the Syrian empire.

This disappointment, however, did not intimidate Demetrius, who, in order to execute his designs, escaped from Rome, with a full resolution of risking his fortune in his own country. Having landed at Tripolis in Syria, he informed the inhabitants of his being the right heir to the crown, and that he was sent by the Roman Senate, who would support his pretensions to take possession of the kingdom. This story being universally credited by the people of Tripolis, they readily espoused the cause of Demetrius, who having raised a few forces in that city, marched towards Antioch, in his way to which he made himself master of many capital places, and the people, giving up Eupater's cause as lost, went over to him in such numbers, that he soon found himself at the head of a very considerable army.

So universal was the disaffection of the people towards Eupater, and so prepossessed were they in favour of Demetrius, that when they heard of his approach near Antioch, the soldiers in the city seized Eupater and the regent Lysias, with a design of delivering them up to Demetrius as soon as he should arrive. Demetrius, however, did not think proper to see them, but gave orders that they should be immediately put to death. This was accordingly done, soon after which Demetrius entered with his army into Antioch, amidst the universal acclamations of the people, and, without any farther opposition, became thoroughly possessed of the Syrian empire.

Soon after Demetrius was settled on the Syrian throne, the base and perfidious Alcimus (whom Antiochus Eupater had constituted high-priest, but who was never, by the Jews, acknowledged as such on account of his apostacy) in order to ingratiate himself in the favour of the new king, went and implored his protection against Judas Maccabeus and his party, whom he accused of being enemies to the kings of Syria, fomentors of sedition, and persecutors of his faithful subjects.

In consequence of this representation Demetrius, who, from the situation of Alcimus, was readily induced to give credit to all he said, was so exasperated, that he immediately ordered Bacchides, a very powerful man, and governor of Mesopotamia, to march with an army into Judea; and having, confirmed Alcimus in the office of high-priest, joined him in the same commission for carrying on the war against the Jews.

On their arrival in Judea the Scribes and Doctors of the law, alarmed at so formidable a force, met together in order to consult, and fix on the most proper methods, to be taken in so critical a state of affairs. After some deliberation it was at length agreed to send deputies to Bacchides and Alcimus, in order to bring matters to a peaceable accommodation. The Jews having obtained the promise of a safe-conduct, accordingly dispatched the deputies, who were sixty in number, on the business; but no sooner did the perfidious and cruel Alcimus get them into his power than he ordered them all to be instantly put to death, thereby violating the promise he had made for their safety, and there-

by justly incurring the hatred and detestation of his brethren.

A short time after this Bacchides returned to Antioch, leaving Alcimus in Judea, with some of his forces, to protect and defend him. In this situation the views of Alcimus were directed fully to secure himself in the office of high-priest, to effect which he endeavoured to ingratiate himself with the people by fair words and obliging behaviour. This so far answered his purpose that he soon doubled the number of forces that had been left him by Bacchides; but they consisted chiefly of renegadoes, who destroyed all the Jews who were friends to Judas wherever they found them.

As soon as Judas understood the cruelties exercised by the people under the command of Alcimus against his brethren in Judea, he marched from Jerusalem in order to give him battle; but Alcimus, knowing himself to be unequal to the contest, retired hastily to Demetrius at Antioch, whom he still farther irritated against Judas, setting forth the great mischief he had already done, and the farther danger to be apprehended from him, unless a proper force was sent to check his proceedings. He farther told him that so long as Judas and his brothers were permitted to live, they would never suffer his authority to take place, nor could any lasting peace be ever established in that part of the country.

In consequence of this representation Demetrius sent another army against the Jews, under the command of Nicanor, one of the principal men of his court, with strict orders to destroy Judas, disperse his followers, and thoroughly establish Alcimus in the office of high-priest. Nicanor, in obedience to these commands, left Antioch, but with no real intent of strictly executing the commission on which he was sent. He was sensible of the courage and conduct of Judas, and therefore, on his arrival in Judea, being unwilling to come to an engagement with him, he endeavoured to compromise matters by treaty, and therefore sent deputies to Judas with this message: "Wherefore (said he) should we risque
" all on the uncertain chance of war, when we
" may better adjust matters by negotiation? I
" pledge my most solemn oath for your security. Peace alone is my object, which you
" may imagine by the number of friends I have
" brought with me, to testify our master's good
" will and affection to all the Jewish nation."

Judas, imagining Nicanor to be sincere, readily agreed to the terms he offered, and accordingly articles of peace were drawn up between them. But Alcimus the high-priest, disapproving of Nicanor's conduct, from a supposition that his own interest was not sufficiently secured in it, resolved to overthrow all that Nicanor had done, and, if possible, still farther irritate Demetrius against the Jews. To this purpose he repaired to Antioch, and so possessed the king against the peace made by Nicanor, that he not only refused to ratify what had been agreed on, but sent his positive commands to him to go on with the war, and not to cease prosecuting it till he had either slain Judas, or taken him prisoner, and sent him bound to Antioch.

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In consequence of these instructions Nicanor being obliged, though much against his inclination, to alter his conduct, marched his army up to Jerusalem, and designing (in order to fulfil the king's commands) to get Judas into his power by craft and treachery, he invited him to a conference, which the other, upon presumption of the depending peace, readily complied with, and set out for the place appointed. But Judas, by some means or other, happening to discover the plot on his way, stopped short, and retreated in time to his own people, who were so incensed at the treachery of Nicanor, that they vowed, if possible, to be amply revenged on him.

As soon as Nicanor found that his plot was discovered, and his designs frustrated, he marched with his army towards Jerusalem, with a resolution of obtaining by force what he could not accomplish by treachery. Judas hearing of his approach led out his army against him, and a battle took place near a village called Capharsalama, in which Judas was worsted, and obliged to save himself by precipitately retreating to Jerusalem.

Animated with this success Nicanor hastened with all expedition after Judas. On his arrival at Mount Sion, he was met by a number of priests, who, having sacrifices with them, shewed them to Nicanor, telling him that they were going to offer them up for the safety of king Demetrius. Nicanor, in a rage, threatened, that if they did not immediately deliver up Judas to him, he would raze the temple to the ground, and destroy the city; but this they could neither comply with, nor was he able to put his threats in execution.

Finding himself thus disappointed, Nicanor, in revenge, executed many severe cruelties on the poor Jews who fell into his hands, and such as were wealthy, he first plundered of their possessions, and then put them to death. Being informed that there lived at some distance a very rich man named Razis, who was also eminent for his steady constancy in the religion of his country, he sent a guard of five hundred men to seize him, thinking the loss of so considerable a person would be a great affliction to the Jews. This company accordingly went, and attacked the good old man in his castle, which he defended for some time with great bravery; but being at length overpowered, and finding himself just ready to fall into the hands of the enemy, rather than be a reproach to his nation by submitting to the infidels, he fell upon his own sword, and put a period to his existence.

Nicanor, finding it unlikely to reduce Jerusalem, left it in a great rage, and encamped his army near a village called Betheron, where he was joined by several Syrian parties, so that the whole of his forces amounted to about thirty-five thousand. This however did not in the least dismay Judas, who, though his army was greatly inferior in number, marched from Jerusalem, and encamped at a place called Adasus, within thirty furlongs of the enemy. In order to encourage his troops, he told them, that though the number of the enemy was great, they need not to fear, for they fought in the cause of God, whose power could crush multitudes; and ad-

vised them rather to think on their own valour than the numbers they were to encounter. "Attack them courageously (said he) and leave the rest to heaven."

The Jews, being thus encouraged by their leader, attacked the enemy with the most intrepid resolution, and the battle was exceeding desperate on both sides for some time, till at length victory declared in favour of Judas, for Nicanor being slain, with a great number of his troops, the rest were so intimidated that they immediately threw down their arms and fled. Judas availed himself of this advantage by pursuing the fugitives, to whom he gave no quarter. In his pursuit he proclaimed his victory by sound of trumpet in all the cities and towns through which he passed; the consequence of which was that the country people gathered together from all parts, and such of the Syrians that fell in their way, in endeavouring to escape, they put to death; so that by means of them, and the close pursuit of Judas and his troops, not a single person of the Syrian army was left to carry home the tidings of their melancholy overthrow.

Judas and his victorious army returning to the field of battle, after the pursuit of the enemy, possessed themselves of the spoils of the slain; and having found Nicanor's body among the dead, they carried it to Jerusalem, where they cut off his head, and placed it upon one of the towers of the city. An universal joy prevailed throughout Jerusalem on this occasion, and, in commemoration of so great a deliverance, it was ordained that the thirteenth day of the month Adar (which answers to part of our February) the day when this victory was obtained, should be ever after observed as an anniversary day of solemn thanksgiving.

After this victory the Jews had a short respite from war, during which Judas, in order, if possible, to obtain a lasting peace, bethought himself of making a league with the Romans. He had heard of their great fame in conquering the Gauls, Carthaginians, Grecians, &c. and was therefore desirous of making an alliance with them, in hopes of thereby obtaining some protection and relief against the oppressions of the Syrians. Judas accordingly dispatched two of his most intimate friends and counsellors (namely, Jason and Eupolemus, whom he knew to be sufficiently capable of executing such an embassy) to Rome, to request of the Senate that the Jews might be admitted as their allies, and that a letter might be sent to Demetrius, requiring him to desist from giving the Jews any further molestation. This proposal proved agreeable to the Senate, who immediately drew up articles of treaty, the original of which they kept, and sent a copy of them to Jerusalem, which were highly approved of by Judas. The purport of these articles was, "that no people subject to the Romans should make war on the Jews, or supply their enemies with money, shipping, corn, &c. and that the Jews should be held to the same terms in case the Romans should be attacked. That if the Jews demanded any future alteration of their agreement, the consent of the whole people should be necessary to ratify it." This was the first alliance ever formed between the Jews.

Jews and the Romans; and the copy of the treaty was carefully preserved in one of the most secure apartments of the temple.

In the mean time, Demetrius, having received an account of the defeat and death of Nicanor, sent Bacchides again into Judea, at the head of a very numerous army, in order to give battle to Judas, and with orders, if possible, to bring him to Antioch dead or alive. Bacchides immediately set out to execute the king's commands, and the first place he encamped at was Arbela, a town in Galilee, where he forced many Jews from the caves to which they had retreated, and cruelly put them to death. From hence he marched towards Jerusalem, in his way to which he learnt that Judas and his army were encamped at a place called Bethfeth. In consequence of this intelligence he immediately marched his forces thither, the whole number consisting of 22,000 foot and 2000 horse; while Judas had no more than 3000 to oppose them and these were so terrified at the strength and number of the enemy, that the greatest part deserted, so that Judas had not above eight hundred left.

But notwithstanding Judas was thus distressed for want of men, and had not any opportunity of recruiting his forces, yet he was fully bent on hazarding a battle, and therefore used the most powerful arguments he was master of to prevail on the few he had to stand by him to the utmost extremity. They, however, expostulated with him on the impropriety of attempting to engage so very superior a number, and advised him rather to retreat with caution, and put off his design till he could augment his forces. To this Judas replied, "It shall never be said of me that I turned my back to an enemy. If it be the will of God that we now fall, let his will be done; but let us not, by an ignominious flight, destroy all the credit of a life of glory." This speech so animated Judas's soldiers, that they unanimously resolved to stand the combat, and every necessary preparation was made for opposing the enemy.

The army of Bacchides was disposed in the following manner. The front was composed of light armed men, and archers, supported by a body of Macedonians, while there were two wings of horse, the right being commanded by Bacchides himself. In this disposition they advanced towards the army of Judas, which they no sooner approached than they sounded a charge, gave a loud shout, and began the attack. The forces of Judas sustained the shock with great intrepidity, and the battle continued desperate for some time, when Judas seeing Bacchides with his right wing pressing hard on his men, relieved them with a band of courageous youths, who broke Bacchides's right wing, and pursued them as far as the mountains of Azotus; but not having sufficient forces to keep the left wing in play during his absence, he was followed and closely surrounded by the enemy. The action was very hot and obstinate: the Jews sold their lives at a dear rate: their general did all that a valiant man could do, till at length being overpowered with numbers, he was, with the greater part of his men, slain, and the rest, inti-

midated at the loss of their leader, betook themselves to flight.

Thus fell the great Judas Maccabeus, the restorer and preserver of the true worship of God, and protector of his distressed countrymen. His two brothers Simon and Jonathan, having obtained permission of Bacchides to remove his body, they conveyed it to Modin, and there interred it in the sepulchre of his ancestors, with all the funeral honour that was due to the memory of so brave and excellent a commander.

After the death of Judas, Bacchides made himself master of the country, and, assisted by the apostate Jews, used all the friends and adherents of the Maccabees, wherever they found them, with the utmost barbarity. At this time likewise there happened to be a general famine throughout the land of Judea; so that through distress for want of bread on the one hand, and the difficulty of defending themselves against their enemies on the other, many of the Jews were, in a manner, compelled to adhere to the faction of the Macedonians. In short, the Jews were never so deplorably miserable, since the Babylonish Captivity, as at this period; so that the late adherents of Judas entreated Jonathan to follow his brother's example in risking his life for the liberties of his country, and besought him to take upon him the office of general, saying, that without a leader to assist them in opposing their enemies, they must all be inevitably lost. Jonathan told them he was willing to do or suffer any thing for the public welfare; on which he was elected general by the unanimous voice of the people.

Bacchides, hearing of this election, and considering that Jonathan was not less likely to give trouble to the Syrians than his brother Judas, set about concerting measures for destroying him; but Jonathan, having intelligence of his design, collected what force he could, and, accompanied by his brother Simon, retired into the wilderness of Tekoa, where he encamped, with a morass on one side, and the river Jordan on the other, so that it was not an easy matter for the enemy to attack them.

Intelligence being given to Bacchides of the place where Jonathan and his forces were encamped, he immediately marched after them, and, having made himself master of the pass that led to their encampment, he fixed on the sabbath to attack them, presuming from thence that he should not meet with the least resistance. In this, however, he found himself mistaken, for Jonathan, after reminding his men of the determination that was made in this case in the time of his father Mattathias, encouraged them to dispute it bravely; which accordingly they did, even till they had slain about a thousand of the assailants, when, finding themselves likely to be overpowered by numbers, they took to the river, and, by swimming over to the opposite side, made their escape, not a single man of them meeting with the least accident.

The Syrian general, instead of making any attempt to pursue them, thought it more advisable to return back to Jerusalem, where, having fortified Mount Acra and the neighbouring towns,

towns, and put garrisons in them, he took hostages for the fidelity of the inhabitants, and then returned to Antioch*.

After the departure of Bacchides, Jonathan and his party, as well as all those Jews who were advocates for preserving their antient religion, lived peaceably for about two years, at the expiration of which the adverse party, envying their happiness, sent to Bacchides, and prevailed on him to return with his army into Judea, proposing to seize Jonathan and all his adherents, as soon as he should arrive with his forces to support the enterprize.

As soon as Jonathan understood that Bacchides was again on his march into Judea, he was greatly alarmed, and knowing himself unable to stand against the great force he had brought with him, he retired into the wilderness, and raised walls round the village of Bethbasi, intending to make that his place of retreat on all emergent occasions.

Bacchides, having received information of Jonathan's retreat, marched with his forces against him. On his approach near Bethbasi, Jonathan left Simon his brother with one part of the forces to defend the place, whilst himself with the other part took the field to harass the enemy. In these capacities the two brothers acted so well, Jonathan by cutting off several of the enemy's parties, and now and then falling on the outskirts of their army employed in the siege; and Simon, by making frequent sallies, and burning the engines they had brought against the place, that Bacchides grew weary of the undertaking, and considering the renegado Jews as the occasion of his return and disgrace, he was so enraged that he ordered several of them to be put to death.

When Bacchides found the forces under Jonathan and his brother Simon too powerful for him, he was almost distracted at the thoughts of failing in an attempt in which he had imagined himself sure of success; but his greatest concern was how to draw off his army without disgrace either to himself or his sovereign. While he was deliberating in what manner to act, Jonathan sent a messenger to him with proposals for a league of mutual friendship on the condition of an exchange of prisoners. Bacchides saw in those proposals so fair an opportunity of abandoning the siege without disgrace, that he immediately acceded thereto; in consequence of which the prisoners were exchanged on both sides, and the respective commanders bound themselves, by a solemn oath, that no farther hostilities should take place between them. This agreement being ratified, Bacchides returned to Antioch, and so strictly did he preserve the treaty of peace made with Jonathan, that he never after returned into the country of Judea.

The wars being thus happily over Jonathan retired to Machmas, a town situated about nine miles to the north of Jerusalem, where he go-

vern'd the people according to law; cut off all those who had apostatized from their religion and country, and, as far as in him lay, reformed all abuses both in church and state.

While Jonathan remained in this peaceable situation, his power was greatly increased by a very unexpected incident that took place in Syria. Alexander, a son of the late Antiochus Epiphanes, laid claim to the Syrian empire; and, being well supported by foreign powers, made himself master of Ptolemais, a city of Palestine, where he concerted the most likely measures for carrying on his design against Demetrius, and divesting him of the sovereignty.

As soon as Demetrius was informed of the proceedings of his rival, he thought it expedient immediately to make his court to Jonathan, and to obtain him as an ally. To this purpose he dispatched messengers with letters to Jonathan, by which he constituted him General of all Judea, with full authority to raise forces, and to provide them with arms; commanding likewise that all those hostages who had been committed prisoners to the fortress of Jerusalem by Bacchides should be immediately set at liberty.

On the receipt of these dispatches Jonathan left Machmas, and repaired to Jerusalem, in order to execute the commands of Demetrius. As soon as he arrived in the city, he publicly read the contents of the king's letters to the soldiers and people, who were greatly surprized at so sudden a turn of fortune in his favour. Having done this he proceeded to make his levies, and gave liberty to the hostages in the fortress of Acra, strictly ordering that they should be permitted to return in safety to their friends. He now resolved to fix his residence at Jerusalem, and in consequence thereof thoroughly repaired the city, fortified it on every side, and rebuilt those walls round the temple which had been destroyed during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes.

In the mean time Alexander (who was no stranger to the valour and courageous actions of Jonathan) assembled his friends together, and represented to them how advantageous it would be to his cause could he form an alliance with him, which there was great reason to think might take place, if proper application was made, on account of the insults he had received from Demetrius, and Bacchides, the general of his forces. The friends of Alexander unanimously agreeing with him in opinion, he immediately dispatched an embassy to Jonathan with a letter to the following purport:

“ Alexander the king, to Jonathan his brother, greeting.

“ Having long been informed of your character for honour, faith and courage, and
“ deeming you every way worthy our best re-
“ gard

* It is highly probable that Demetrius had, by this time, received letters from the Romans in behalf of the Jews, in consequence of the treaty of friendship formed between them and Judas, and that therefore the king had sent orders to Bacchides to cease persecuting those people, in

obedience to which he at this time left the country.—Just before the departure of Bacchides Alcimus the high-priest was suddenly struck with a fit of the palsy, which, in a very short time, deprived him of life.

“gard, we have dispatched ambassadors to offer
 “you our friendship and alliance, and have com-
 “missioned them to treat for the same: and by
 “these presents, and our royal authority, we
 “constitute and ordain thee high-priest of the
 “Jews, and rank thee in the number of the
 “king’s friends; and we likewise present thee
 “with a crown of gold and a purple robe, en-
 “tertaining no doubt of a proper return being
 “made by you for this instance of our regard
 “and esteem.”

The emissaries of Demetrius, having got intelligence of this message being sent by Alexander to Jonathan, immediately informed their master of what had passed; upon which Demetrius resolved, if possible, to gain over Jonathan, by outbidding his rival, dispatched a messenger to him with a letter to the following purpose:

“Demetrius the king, to Jonathan, and the Jewish people, greeting.

“As we have already entered into a treaty
 “of alliance with you we would wish to fix it
 “on a lasting and uninterrupted foundation.
 “Wherefore it is our pleasure that your tri-
 “butes be remitted, and we hereby remit all
 “the taxes formerly paid to our predecessors or
 “ourselves; (exclusive of the salt and crown
 “taxes, with the thirds of your corn and fruits)
 “and these duties we give up for all future
 “times, as well as the poll-tax on the inhabi-
 “tants throughout Judea, and the three go-
 “vernments of Galilee, Samaria, and Peræa.
 “It is our pleasure likewise that Jerusalem and
 “its dependencies be exempted from all tenths
 “and tributes, be deemed holy, and have the
 “privileges of a sanctuary. Let the citadel be
 “delivered to Jonathan the high-priest, with
 “permission to place in it a garrison of such of
 “his friends as he may think proper. We far-
 “ther command that, immediately on receipt
 “hereof, liberty be given to all Jewish prisoners
 “in every part of our dominions, without any
 “fees imposed, even on their cattle: that their
 “sabbaths and solemn festivals, and three days
 “preceding each, shall be deemed days of free-
 “dom to the Jews throughout our dominions,
 “that they may live at peace, and unmolested.
 “That thirty thousand Jews, if so many shall
 “be willing, may bear arms in our service, and
 “receive the same pay as our own troops: that
 “they be entrusted in garrisons, and near our
 “person; and that our royal family receive the
 “better sort of them as domestics. In Jerusa-
 “lem, and the three dependent provinces, the
 “Jews shall freely exercise their own laws; but
 “the high-priest must take care that the temple
 “of Jerusalem be the only one in which the
 “Jews worship. Fifteen thousand shekels of
 “silver we also grant annually towards the ex-
 “pence of their sacrifices; and we remit the
 “ten thousand drachms formerly paid to our
 “predecessors by the priests and officers attend-
 “ing the service of the temple. We farther
 “order that all debtors repairing to the temple
 “of Jerusalem, or the liberties thereof, on ac-
 “count of debt, shall remain unmolested both
 “in person and property. We also permit and
 “require that the temple be repaired; that for-

“fications be made round it, and that such
 “strong places as the Jews think proper to fortify shall have garrisons stationed in them:
 “and all this shall be done at our own expence.”

The advantageous indulgences offered to Jonathan and his people by the two rival princes were so great, that for some time he knew not on which side to convey his interest. At length, after consulting the heads of the Jews, who could not forget what a bitter enemy Demetrius had been to all who adhered to the true interest of their country, and suspecting at the same time that his offers proceeded only from the necessity of his affairs which would certainly be revoked as soon as the storm was blown over, it was resolved to enter into a league with Alexander; in consequence of which Jonathan, accepting of his grant of the high-priest’s office, did, on the Feast of Tabernacles, which soon after ensued, put on the pontifical robes, and officiated as high-priest, after that office had been vacant four years, namely, ever since the death of the wicked Alcimus.

In the mean time the two contending parties, having drawn together all their forces, resolved to adjust the dispute between them by one decisive battle. The army of Alexander was composed partly of such as had gone over to him from Demetrius, and partly of his own troops, who assisted him in taking possession of Ptolemais. Soon after the battle commenced, the right wing of Alexander’s forces was pressed hard by the left of Demetrius, who pushed their advantage even to the plundering of the camp; but Alexander’s forced the opposite column, where Demetrius fought in person, till it was totally routed. Demetrius did wonders, killing and pursuing his enemies, and defending himself, for a considerable time, till at length his horse plunging into a bog, and he being oppressed with multitudes, was obliged to yield, though not till his body was covered with darts and arrows. Thus died Demetrius king of Syria, after having enjoyed the sovereignty of that empire about eleven years.

On the death of Demetrius, Alexander became master of the whole Syrian empire, and was placed on the throne by the unanimous voice of the people. Soon after this he wrote a letter to Ptolemy Philometer, king of Egypt, proposing a match between himself and his daughter, and intimating that there would be no disgrace in such an alliance, after the conquest of Demetrius, and the recovery of a kingdom, which was his own in right of his father.

This proposal was highly satisfactory to Ptolemy, who sent a letter to Alexander, congratulating him on his late success, promising to bestow his daughter on him in marriage, and that he would meet him at Ptolemais, where, if he thought proper, the nuptials should be celebrated.

Ptolemy, agreeable to his engagement, went soon after with his daughter to the place appointed, where Alexander attending, the parties were married, and he received as a wedding portion a sum becoming the dignity of the father. To this wedding Jonathan the high-priest was invited, and was received by both the kings with great favour and respect, especially by Alexander, who,

who, to do him a particular honour, caused him to be clothed in purple, and to take place near himself among the first princes of his kingdom; besides which he made him general of all his forces in Judea, and gave him an office of great honour and profit in his palace.

Alexander now thought himself arrived at the summit of happiness, and that he should enjoy a life of uninterrupted tranquillity; but he soon found himself mistaken. A short time after Demetrius, the son of the late Demetrius, resolving to revenge his father's death, and recover his kingdom, went to Crete (where he and his brother Antiochus had been concealed during the late troubles) and, with an army of mercenaries, landed in Cilicia. This alarmed Alexander, who instantly marched from Phœnicia to Antioch to secure his affairs there before the arrival of Demetrius. In the mean time Demetrius had gained over to his interest Apollonius the governor of Cœle Syria, who, to oblige Jonathan to quit Alexander's party, and join with Demetrius, marched with an army as far as Jaminia, from whence he sent a challenge to Jonathan, defying him to meet him with his sword in the open field, and putting the issue on their single contest; boasting likewise that he was at the head of a number of the bravest men in the empire, whose valour had frequently made his ancestors yield to their superior power.

Irritated at this daring message, Jonathan, accompanied by his brother Simon, left Jerusalem at the head of ten thousand men, and encamped near Joppa, the gates of which were shut by a garrison belonging to Apollonius. Jonathan demanded entrance, which being refused he immediately made the necessary preparations for attacking the place; when the garrison, knowing themselves too weak to make any opposition against so formidable a body of forces, quietly surrendered.

As soon as Apollonius was informed that Jonathan was in possession of Joppa, he marched with his army and encamped in the fields near that place. Hereupon Jonathan advanced to give him battle; but when the armies came near each other Apollonius thought proper to make a retreat. Jonathan, however, continued to advance, till his antagonist having got him to a spot of ground which he thought particularly advantageous, faced about, and prepared to engage. He planted a thousand horse to attack Jonathan in the rear; but the latter being aware of this disposition, formed his men into a square figure, so that they might be enabled to engage the enemy on all sides at the same time.

Before the battle began Jonathan encouraged his soldiers to behave themselves like men, and cautioned them to forbear falling in with the enemy at first, but to receive their arrows with their shields till the enemy had spent them, and then to fall on. Apollonius's horse, on whom he chiefly depended, began a distant fight, discharging continued flights of arrows for a considerable time; till at length Simon, seeing them weary with shooting, and their arrows spent, fell on with his party, and routed them, whilst Jonathan engaged the main body, of which he killed great numbers, and put the rest to flight. The broken forces of Apollonius's army hastened with all expedition

to Azotus, where they took shelter in a famous temple dedicated to the idol Dagon; but Jonathan pursuing them, no sooner entered the town than he set fire to the temple and reduced the whole place to ashes, so that the number of those who were slain in the battle, and perished in the flames, amounted to no less than eight thousand.

Having thus destroyed the army of Apollonius, Jonathan, after serving several places belonging to the enemy in like manner as he had done Azotus, marched with his army to Ascalon, and encamped near that city with a design of laying siege to it. But the inhabitants, instead of attempting to make any opposition, brought many valuable presents as a testimony of their submission, which Jonathan readily accepted, and then returned, laden with the spoils of the enemy, in triumph to Jerusalem.

As soon as Alexander heard of the success of Jonathan over his general Apollonius, he sent messengers to Jerusalem to congratulate him on the occasion, and to assure him that the conduct of Apollonius took place without his knowledge. In token of his approbation of what Jonathan had done he sent him a buckle of gold, such as none but the royal family were permitted to wear, and at the same time made him a present of the city of Ecron together with all the territories thereunto belonging.

About this time Ptolemy Philometer arrived in Syria with a considerable body of forces in order to assist his son-in-law Alexander. Agreeable to the king's order he was received with great respect by the people of all the cities and towns through which he passed, except at Azotus, where the inhabitants complained to him of the burning of the temple of Dagon, and reviled Jonathan for having ravaged their country with fire and sword. Ptolemy gave them a patient hearing, but fearful of disobliging Jonathan, did not think proper to do any thing in their favour without his knowledge.

As soon as Jonathan heard that Ptolemy was arrived in Syria, and advanced as far as Joppa, he went thither to pay his compliments to him, and was received with the greatest marks of honour and friendship; after which he conducted Ptolemy as far as the river Eleutherus, where he took his leave, and returned to Jerusalem.

As Ptolemy was on his way to the city of Ptolemais, he fortunately discovered a plot which had been concerted by Ammonius, a great favourite of Alexander, for taking away his life, though no reason could be assigned for such diabolical intentions. In consequence of this discovery, on his arrival at Ptolemais, he wrote to Alexander, demanding that justice might be done on the traitor; but Alexander refusing to give him up, Ptolemy was fully convinced that the king was concerned in the plot, and therefore entertained an implacable hatred against him, which soon terminated in his ruin.

The first step Ptolemy took to show his resentment on this occasion was, to take his daughter Cleopatra from Alexander, and give her to his rival Demetrius, with assurance that he would restore him to his father's throne; after which he marched with his army to Antioch.

At this time Ammonius, the king's favourite, who had concerted the plot, in conjunction with Alexander,

Alexander, for the destruction of Ptolemy, was at Antioch; and no sooner did the Antiochians hear of Ptolemy's approach than they determined to execute their resentment on Ammonius, whom they had long detested for his cruelty and oppression. They therefore rose in a body, and slew him in one of the streets in the city; soon after which Ptolemy arriving they opened their gates to him, and unanimously proclaimed him king of Syria.

Ptolemy was a man of honour, discretion and temperance, and so conducted himself in all public affairs, as to afford satisfaction to his own people, without giving any offence to the Romans. The offer made him by the people of Antioch was very inducing, but his honour giving way to interest, he modestly declined the compliment, and having called a council of the heads of the people, he advised them to receive Demetrius, the true heir to their crown, as their sovereign. He told them that he hoped all past enmity would be forgotten; that he would himself be bound for his faithfully executing the trust reposed in him; and desired that, with respect to himself, he might be permitted to content

himself with the government of his own dominions. This modest address had the desired effect: the people with one voice received Demetrius as their king, admitted him into the city with great pomp, and placed him on the throne of his ancestors.

When Alexander, who was at this time in Cilicia, heard of what had passed at Antioch, he marched with all his force to meet Ptolemy, wasting the country through which he passed with fire and sword. On his approach near Antioch, Ptolemy and his new son-in-law met him and gave him battle, the issue of which was that Alexander's army was totally routed, and himself forced to fly into Arabia, where Zabdiel, king of that part of the country, cut off his head, and sent it as a present to Demetrius at Antioch. Ptolemy was not a little pleased with the sight of the head of his treacherous antagonist; but his satisfaction on this account was of short duration, for at the expiration of five days he died of the wounds he had received in the battle, leaving his son-in-law Demetrius in quiet possession of the Syrian empire.

C H A P. XIV.

Jonathan, the high-priest, and governor of the Jews, lays siege to the fortress of Acra. He goes to Ptolemais, in obedience to the orders of Demetrius, to whom he makes many rich presents, and from whom he, in return, receives the promises of very distinguished favours. He sends an army to the assistance of Demetrius, who, after having his purposes answered, takes off those indulgences he had before granted to Jonathan. Tryphon (the governor of Antioch during the reign of Alexander) overcomes Demetrius, murders Jonathan and his two sons, together with Antiochus (son of the late Alexander, whom he had placed on the throne of Syria) and afterwards usurps the government to himself. Simon succeeds his brother Jonathan in the command of the Jewish forces, and taking the fortress of Acra, levels it with the ground. Antiochus Sidetes, brother to Demetrius, lays claim to the crown of Syria, and marches with a body of forces against the usurper Tryphon, who is taken and put to death. Antiochus, having got full possession of the throne, sends an army against Simon, who engages them and obtains a complete victory. Ptolemy, the son-in-law of Simon, causes him and two of his sons to be assassinated, after which he sends the same assassins to murder Hyrcanus, the youngest son of Simon, but he being apprized of their intentions, renders them abortive. Hyrcanus is made high-priest and appointed commander of the Jews in the place of his father Simon. He assists Antiochus Sidetes in his war against the Parthians; at the close of which Antiochus and his army are cut to pieces by the inhabitants of the country. Demetrius, after enduring a long imprisonment, is set at liberty, and recovers the kingdom of Syria, but is deposed and put to death. Hyrcanus enlarges his territories, and makes himself master of Samaria. He is greatly incensed against the Pharisees. His death and character.

JONATHAN, being now grown considerable in power, resolved to make himself complete master of Jerusalem by possessing himself of the fortress of Acra, which was still in the hands of the Syrians. To effect this he laid siege to it with a considerable body of forces; but some of the garrison escaping by night, went to Demetrius and acquainted him with the steps taken by Jonathan. In consequence of this intelligence, Demetrius left Antioch, and marched with a considerable army in order to relieve the place. On his arrival at Ptolemais he sent for Jonathan,

who being desirous of keeping up friendship with him, immediately obeyed his orders, taking with him presents of gold and silver, fine robes, and other valuable effects, which he gave to Demetrius, being attended by the priests and elders of the people. The king was so pleased with this distinguished and interesting compliment, that he confirmed Jonathan in the office of high-priest, and instead of going to the assistance of the garrison of Acra, returned to Antioch.

Demetrius was hardly returned to his home, before Jonathan (encouraged by the favour he had

had so lately received) sent messengers to him, requesting that, on his paying three hundred talents annually, he might be excused from all tolls, taxes, and tributes under his government; upon which Demetrius immediately sent away dispatches to the following effect:

“ Demetrius the king greets his brother Jonathan, and the rest of the Jewish nation.

“ You are hereby to understand that we have written a letter to our trusty and well-beloved cousin Lathenes, a copy of which is herewith transmitted.

Demetrius the king, to his cousin Lathenes, greeting.

“ Such is the sense we entertain of the return that our friends, the Jews, have, from time to time, made to our good will, that we are resolved to give them some distinguishing testimony of our particular esteem and regard for their welfare. Wherefore we hereby command that the governors of Aphareima, Lydda, and Ramatha, with all the lands dependent on those places, be assigned to the use of Judea: and we exempt Jerusalem from all taxes heretofore paid to our ancestors, as well those called crown taxes, and on salt-pits, as those on corn and fruit; and we command that, for the future, nothing of the kind be demanded. Take care that a copy of this letter be sent to Jonathan, and let it be hung up in one of the most conspicuous parts of the holy temple of Jerusalem.”

Demetrius, being now in full and quiet possession of the throne, and having reason to think he should not be interrupted by any enemies, dismissed his army without giving them their full pay, and retained in his service only a number of mercenary troops, which had been collected in Crete and other adjacent islands. This discharge of the troops (and more especially without giving them their full pay for past services) alienated the affections of the people, his ancestors having been accustomed to keep them in pay in time of peace as well as war.

In the mean time Jonathan was carrying on the siege of the fortress of Acra; but finding himself not likely to reduce it, he sent an embassy to Demetrius, requesting him to withdraw the garrison, it being out of his power to conquer them by force of arms. This, and much more, Demetrius promised to do for Jonathan, provided he would but send him some forces to reduce the inhabitants of Antioch, who had taken up arms against him.

In compliance with this request Jonathan immediately dispatched three thousand of his choicest men to the assistance of Demetrius, who, arriving at Antioch just as the people had beset the palace with intent to murder the king, immediately fell on them with fire and sword, and having burnt a great part of the city, and slain about 100,000 of the inhabitants, they obliged the rest to have recourse to the king's clemency, and sue for peace; after which Demetrius sent back the troops to Jonathan, with acknowledgments that the subjugation of his

rebellious subjects was entirely owing to their distinguished valour.

But these services were soon forgot by Demetrius, who, thinking he should not have any farther occasion to call in the assistance of Jonathan, broke the agreement he had made in exempting him from the payment of the usual taxes; and (though he had received three hundred talents in lieu of them) threatened him with military execution, unless he sent the same taxes and tributes which had been usually paid by his predecessors.

These threats Demetrius would have certainly carried into execution had it not been for the intervention of a very singular and unexpected incident, which obliged him to employ his forces another way. One Tryphon (who had formerly served Alexander as governor of Antioch, but was laid aside in the reign of Demetrius) observing that the tyranny and oppression which was every where practised, the disbanding the Syrian soldiers, and retaining only foreigners in pay, together with many other grievances under which the people laboured, had quite alienated their hearts, and made them ready for a general defection throughout the kingdom, he thought this the most favourable opportunity of putting in practice a scheme which he had long concerted, namely, to advance himself to the throne of the Syrian empire.

To this purpose Tryphon went into Arabia, and getting young Antiochus (son of the late Alexander) out of the hands of one Malchus, in whose care he had been placed, he took him into Syria, and on his arrival there, immediately proclaimed him king. The disaffection of the people to Demetrius was so great that not only all the soldiers whom he had disbanded, but likewise others whom his ill conduct had made his enemies, flocked in great numbers to Tryphon, so that he soon found himself at the head of a very considerable army. Animated with this success he immediately marched against Demetrius, when a severe battle took place, which terminated in favour of Tryphon, the army of Demetrius being totally routed, great numbers killed, and himself obliged to fly into Cilicia for safety. After the battle was over, Tryphon marched with his victorious army into Antioch, and immediately placed Antiochus on the throne, amidst the universal acclamations of the people.

By the direction of Tryphon, together with the advice of his friends about him, Antiochus, soon after his accession, sent an embassy to Jonathan, complimenting him with the title of friend and ally, confirming him in the office of high-priest, together with those places and dignities he had formerly held, and granting him many very distinguished privileges. He likewise appointed Simon, the brother of Jonathan, governor of all those parts of the country which reached from Tyre to the frontiers of Egypt. These compliments and indulgences were highly pleasing to Jonathan, who sent messengers back to Antiochus and Tryphon, with assurance of his friendship, and that he would readily join them against Demetrius as the common enemy.

Jonathan having received a commission from Antiochus to raise forces, left Jerusalem, and

went into Syria and Phœnicia for that purpose. When he came to Askalon he was received in great form by the people, who made him many valuable presents, and whom he invited, as he had done those in the other cities through which he had passed, to give up Demetrius, and espouse the cause of Antiochus, which request they unanimously agreed to.

Jonathan having thus got over the people of Askalon, and raised a great number of forces in the city, proceeded from thence to Gaza, where he met with a quite different reception, for, contrary to his expectation, they shut their gates against him, and declared for Demetrius. In consequence of this Jonathan laid siege to the place, and in order to terrify them into submission, sent a detachment of his forces to destroy the adjoining towns and villages with fire and sword. The inhabitants of Gaza, having no reason to expect assistance from Demetrius, and seeing nothing before them but destruction, sent deputies to make submission to Jonathan, who received them in the most friendly manner. He readily accepted the conditions they offered, and having received hostages for the fulfilment of the same, and sent them to Jerusalem, he quitted Gaza, and proceeded with his forces towards Damascus.

In the mean time Demetrius had encamped with a large army near Cades, a place bordering on Tyre and Galilee, with a view of enticing Jonathan out of his way, and defeating him. But Jonathan continued his rout, leaving the care of Judea to his brother Simon, who, assembling together what forces he could, marched and attacked the strong fortrefs of Bethsura, then in possession of the Partizans of Demetrius. The people of the garrison, being apprehensive they should all be put to the sword, requested Simon's permission to march unmolested to Demetrius; which he readily granted, and placed another garrison of his own people in their stead.

By this time Jonathan had advanced with his forces, which he had greatly increased on the way, as far as the plain of Nasor, where he encamped unsuspecting of any danger; but Demetrius, having notice of his situation, dispatched one of his parties to lay in ambush behind a mountain, while the main body advanced to attack Jonathan on the plain. As soon as Jonathan found himself thus beset, he gave the best orders to his soldiers the shortness of time would permit; but the Jews seeing the party of Demetrius who were placed in ambush, and fearful of being surrounded by the enemy, the greater part of them threw down their arms, and precipitately fled. So general was the terror that only a very small party remained with Jonathan, who were encouraged to stand against the enemy by means of their leader, together with the two captains, Mattathias, the son of Absalom, and Judas the son of Calphi. These charged the front of the enemy in so desperate a manner, that their lines were soon broke, which being seen by those who had deserted from Jonathan, they immediately returned, and fell on with such fury, that Demetrius's army was entirely routed, no less than 3000 being killed on the spot, and the rest obliged to save themselves by a precipitate flight.

After this victory Jonathan returned to Jerusalem, from whence he dispatched ambassadors to

Rome to renew former alliances, giving them directions to come back by the way of Lacedemon, on business of a similar nature. The Romans received the ambassadors with the highest respect, and dismissed them with letters, recommending that a safe passage might be granted them by the potentates of every dominion through which they might have occasion to pass. On their return, they delivered the following letter to the Lacedemonians.

Jonathan, the high-priest, and the elders of the nation, and the priests, and the other people of the Jews, with the Lacedemonians their bretheren, send greeting.

“ By a letter of very antient date from your king Arcus to our high-priest Onias (a copy of which we have enclosed) we find that we are nearly allied to you in blood; and by the testimony we there gave to Arcus it appears how happy we were in the ratification of such an alliance. Now we would inform you that we should, ere this time, have claimed your friendship, but we left the honour of giving the example to you. From the first ratification of your friendship to the present time, we have constantly prayed to God that you might live in health and prosperity, and vanquish your foes. In all our distresses and misfortunes from the malice of ambitious neighbours, we have been cautious not to trouble you, or other allies: but Divine Providence having put an end to our wars, and our affairs being more at ease, we have dispatched Nume-nius, the son of Antiochus and Antipater the son of Jason (both men of honour and senators) with letters to the Romans, and to yourselves, for renewing and strengthening the league of friendship between us. Return what answer you think proper; but let us know how we may serve you, that we may testify our affectionate regard by every means in our power.”

A short time after the return of the ambassadors Jonathan, being informed that the forces of Demetrius (which were now greatly augmented) were advancing towards him, he hastened with all expedition to meet them at Amathis, being fully resolved, if possible, to prevent their entrance into Judea. He encamped about fifty furlongs from the camp of Demetrius, from whence he sent spies to discover the design of the enemy; who, taking some prisoners, learnt from them it was intended to surprize him in his encampment. In consequence of this intelligence Jonathan made every necessary preparation for overthrowing the designs of the enemy, by fixing centinels at the out-posts, and keeping his men under arms all night, previously acquainting them with what was intended. In the mean time Demetrius's commanders understanding that their plan had been discovered, were puzzled how to act, knowing themselves too weak to make an open attack; and therefore at length formed the resolution of decamping in the night, which they accordingly did, and covered their retreat with a number of fires. At day break Jonathan marched to attack them, when finding their camp abandoned, he pursued them with the utmost expedition; but these endeavours proved fruitless, the enemy having retreated to a secure place beyond

yond the river Eleutherus. In consequence of this Jonathan pursued his course to Arabia, where he plundered the country of the Nabatheans, took great numbers of their cattle; and made many of the inhabitants prisoners, whom he conducted to Damascus, and there sold for slaves.

In the mean time Simon proceeded with his forces through Judea and Palestine to Askalon, fortifying all the defensible places he came to in his way. From Askalon he went to Joppa, of which he soon made himself master and placed a proper garrison in it, to prevent its falling into the hands of Demetrius.

Jonathan, and his brother Simon, having taken the necessary measures to prevent any injury from the enemy abroad, returned to Jerusalem, and the people, being summoned to the temple by the high-priest, he made a proposition to repair the walls of the city, fortify them with towers, and to cut off the communication between the city and cattle by another wall: likewise to put the whole country in a state of defence by placing proper garrisons in such parts of it as were thought best for the security of the people. This proposition being unanimously approved of, Jonathan took the care of the city upon himself, and committed the country department to his brother Simon.

During these transactions the treacherous and base Tryphon, who had no other views in getting young Antiochus into his hands than to answer his own wicked purposes, was concerting the completion of his plan for possessing himself of the throne of Syria; and he now resolved to make one bold push for accomplishing his wishes. He knew that while Jonathan was in the interest of Antiochus he could not possibly execute his design, and therefore the first business was to curtail him of his power; but as he was sensible he could not do this by force, the only measure he had to fly to was stratagem. To this purpose he went to Basan, where, at his request, Jonathan met him with an army of 40,000 men. On his arrival, Tryphon made him many presents and compliments, directed the officers of his own army to obey Jonathan as himself, and proceeded, with great artifice, from one subtlety to another. At length he told Jonathan that, as the war was over, and Demetrius, from his low condition, was no longer able to trouble him, he might disband his army, keeping only a proper body guard, and attend him to Ptolemais, which place, with all the adjacent towns, he was resolved to put into his possession.

Attracted by these arguments and promises Jonathan dismissed all his army except three thousand men, two of which he left in Galilee, and went with Tryphon to Ptolemais with the other thousand. As soon as he had entered the city the inhabitants, who had received previous instructions from Tryphon how to act, immediately shut the gates, killed his thousand men, and made him prisoner.

Tryphon, having thus far succeeded in his design, dispatched a party of his army into Galilee, with orders to destroy the two thousand men which Jonathan had left in that part of the country. These, however, having received information of the manner in which Jonathan had

been treated at Ptolemais, were prepared to receive them, and facing them in order to engage, so intimidated them that they thought proper to avoid a battle, and returned to Ptolemais without executing the business on which they were sent.

When the inhabitants of Jerusalem heard of the imprisonment of Jonathan (for whom they had the highest regard) and the massacre of their brethren, they were greatly afflicted, and universal lamentations prevailed throughout the city. While he was their leader they had no fears, but now he was gone they were apprehensive of the utmost danger from their enemies, whose power they now thought it was impossible for them to withstand. To dissipate these disagreeable apprehensions, and to remove that gloom which not only hung on the minds but the countenances of the people, Simon, having summoned them together for the purpose, addressed them in words to this effect:

"It is unnecessary, friends and countrymen, for me to say that my father, brothers and myself, have been always ready to expose ourselves for the common liberty: the defence of law and religion has been the business of our family; nor am I so lost to the authority of example as to think of preserving my life by the forfeit of my honour. Seek not, therefore, for another commander, since I am willing to lead you wherever great and glorious actions shall call us. I count not myself greater than my brethren, nor value my life more than they did theirs. Never shall it be said that I have departed from the dignity of my family. I have no doubt but God will, by my hands, avenge you of your enemies, deliver you, your wives and children, from those who oppress you, and secure the holy temple from defilement."

This speech so animated the people, and dispelled their fears, that they unanimously exclaimed, "Simon alone ought to succeed his brothers Judas and Jonathan: let Simon be our general and we will obey his commands." Simon, being thus elected leader of the Jews, the first step he took was, to order the walls of the city to be repaired and fortified; having done which he dispatched his friend Jonathan, the son of Absalom, to Joppa, to clear that town of its inhabitants, being fearful lest they should deliver it into the hands of Tryphon.

Soon after this Tryphon, at the head of a considerable army, marched into Judea, having with him Jonathan as his prisoner. Simon, being aware of his approach, headed his forces, and proceeded to meet him, which he did on a mountain that overlooked the plain near the city of Adida. As soon as Tryphon saw the Jewish army, and understood that Simon had been chosen their leader, he did not think proper to engage them, and therefore resolved, instead of force, to endeavour to obtain his ends by stratagem and deceit. To effect this he dispatched one of his principal officers to Simon with a message to the following effect. "That he had seized Jonathan only because he owed an hundred talents to the king; but that, in case he would send the money and Jonathan's

"two

“two sons, to be hostages for their father’s fidelity, he would again set him at liberty.”

Simon had not the least doubt of there being a deception intended by this message; but he thought that, if he refused the money as a ransom, or the sons as hostages, it might cost Jonathan his life, and that his death would consequently be imputed to him. He therefore summoned a council of the principal people, to whom he intimated his suspicion of treachery; but at the same time observed, that he thought it would be most proper to send both the young men and the money, as otherwise the people might think him indifferent with respect to his brother’s safety. This being unanimously agreed to the hostages and money were sent to Tryphon, who, instead of fulfilling his agreement by delivering up Jonathan, retained both him and sons. He then marched with his army to different parts of the country, and would have ravaged and laid waste the principal places in his way, had it not been for Simon, who watched his motions so closely as to prevent his carrying his designs into execution.

At length Tryphon arrived with his army at Adora, a city of Idumea, where he received intelligence that the garrison of Acra were in great want of provisions, and that they earnestly requested he would immediately go to their assistance. In consequence of this Tryphon ordered his horse to march early the next morning to Jerusalem; but so deep a snow fell in the night, that there was no possibility of his commands being executed. He therefore returned to Coelo-Syria, and passed through Galaad, near the city of Bascama, where he basely caused Jonathan and his two sons to be put to death.

Tryphon, thinking there was not any thing now to obstruct his main design, proceeded to Antioch, where he had not been long before he caused young Antiochus to be privately murdered, giving it out that he lost his life by an accident which happened in his exercises. This report being credited, Tryphon, by his artifices and deceit, so wrought on the minds of the people, that they unanimously chose him for their king, and immediately placed him on the Syrian throne.

In the mean time Simon was returned to Jerusalem, where hearing of his brother Jonathan’s death, and that he was buried at Bascama in the land of Galaad, he sent for his remains, which he deposited in his father’s sepulchre at Modin, and ordered a general mourning to be held on the occasion. He afterwards erected a stately monument over the sepulchre, the whole

of which was of white marble polished, and curiously wrought with a variety of figures*.

When Simon heard of the death of Antiochus, and the treachery of the base usurper Tryphon he sent to Demetrius, (who was then at Laodicea in Phrygia) a crown of gold, and ambassadors to treat with him on terms of peace and alliance. The king granted to Simon a confirmation of the High-Priesthood and principality, and to the people a release of all taxes, tolls and tributes on condition that they would join with him against the usurper Tryphon. In consequence of this treaty, by which Simon was made sovereign prince of Judea, and the land freed from all foreign yoke, the Jews, from this time, instead of dating their instruments and contracts by the years of the Syrian king’s (as hitherto they had done) dated them by the years of Simon and his successors.

Being thus fully invested with sovereign authority, and freed from all foreign wars, Simon took a progress through Judea, to inspect the most material parts, and to supply what was most wanted for the security of the whole. He repaired all those fortifications that were decayed, and erected new ones in such places as he thought necessary. He likewise reduced several cities possessed by the heathens in different parts, particularly Gazara, and Jamnia, and having routed the inhabitants, placed some of his own people in their stead. On his return he would have laid siege to the fortrefs of Acra, had not the garrison (from their great distress for want of provisions) readily surrendered the place. In consequence of this Simon, wisely considering how much the city of Jerusalem had been injured by that citadel, pulled it down to the ground, that it might no longer be a retreat for the seditious and factious; and, to prevent its being rebuilt, he levelled the hill on which it was situated, so that there was now no eminence left about Jerusalem, except the Mount on which stood the temple.

In the mean time the base and perfidious Tryphon, having possessed himself of the throne of Syria, began to display that turpitude of heart by which he had been distinguished while in a private character. His point was no sooner gained than he threw off the mask, and proved that the name of Tryphon (which signifies a desolate wretch) was an epithet he justly merited. His disposition and conduct proved so disagreeable to the soldiers in particular, that they deserted in great numbers, and fled to Cleopatra, the wife of Demetrius†, who was at this time in retirement with her children in Seleucia, while Antiochus

* This edifice, being erected on an eminence, was conspicuous a considerable distance at sea; and, on that coast, was particularly noticed as a good sea-mark. Adjoining to the monument Simon placed seven pyramids, two for his father and mother, four his brethren, and the seventh for himself, and then encompassed the whole with a stately portico supported by marble pillars, each of one entire piece, and on which were engraved ships, and arms, with other military ensigns. Josephus tells us, that the whole of this fabric was entire in his days, and that it was considered as a very curious and excellent piece of architecture. Eusebius likewise mentions it, and says that it was complete in his time, which was two hundred years after the death of Josephus.

† Demetrius was at this time a prisoner in Parthia. After retreating from the army of the Jews under Jonathan, he went into Mesopotamia, proposing to ravage that country, and reduce Babylon. His plan was to fix the seat of war in the upper provinces, the Greek and Macedonian inhabitants of which had invited him thither, with promises of obedience, and offers of assistance, against Arsaces, king of Parthia. Encouraged hereby, and thinking that after he had conquered the Parthians, it would be no difficult matter to drive Tryphon out of Syria, he accepted their offers, and marching into their country, was cheerfully received by a large army, at the head of which he attacked Arsaces, who totally routed him, took him prisoner, and destroyed the greater part of his forces.

ochus (the brother of Demetrius) was in an obscure situation in Crete.

Cleopatra, encouraged by the advice of her friends, and the appearance of the soldiers who had deserted from Tryphon, as well as urged by the fears she had lest the people of Seleucia should deliver up the place to the usurper, dispatched a messenger to Antiochus, offering him the crown of Syria if he would but come and join his interest with her's against Tryphon. This offer Antiochus readily accepted, and soon after arriving in Syria, the people flocked to him in such prodigious numbers that he soon found himself at the head of a very considerable army. With these forces he marched against Tryphon, conquered him in battle, drove him from Syria to Phœnicia, and at length pent him up in the strong fortrefs of Adora. Antiochus carried on the siege for some time, till at length Tryphon made his escape, and after flying from one place to another, endeavoured to shelter himself in Apamea, his place of nativity, but an universal disgust prevailing against him among the inhabitants, they seized him and put him to death. This put an end to his usurpation, and Antiochus became fully possessed of his brother's throne*.

Antiochus, previous to his going into Syria on the late expedition, in order to get Simon over to his interest, had written a letter to him, in which he made him many grants, and promised the most distinguished privileges to the Jews should he succeed in his enterprize. But no sooner was he settled on the throne than he forgot all the promises he had made, and sent ambassadors to Simon, demanding him to deliver up Joppa and Gazara, with several other places, or otherwise immediately to remit him a thousand talents of silver.

Simon, thinking these conditions too unreasonable, positively refused to comply with either; upon which Antiochus sent an army, under the command of his general Cendebeus, to enforce them, giving him orders, if Simon persisted in his disobedience, to ravage the country of Judea, and bring him prisoner to Antioch.

The thoughts of this base perfidy in Antiochus so irritated Simon that, though now far advanced in years, he, with a juvenile courage, made the necessary preparations for giving Cendebeus a warm reception. Having gathered together his forces he dispatched two divisions of them before under the command of two of his sons Judas and John (the latter of whom was af-

terwards called Hyrcanus) while himself took a circle with the main body of the army, planting ambuscades in different parts of the country. As soon as Judas and his brother, with their respective forces appeared, Cendebeus's army fled, which being seen by Simon and the ambuscaders, they all pursued them together, and the enemy, not chusing to face about, or make any attempt to defend themselves, the greatest part of them were put to the sword.

After this victory Simon renewed his alliance with the Romans, and continued in peace till the eighth year of his government, when he was barbarously murdered by the treachery of his son-in law Ptolemy, whom he had appointed governor of the plains of Jericho. This execrable villain, who was rich and ambitious, had laid a design for usurping the government of Judea to himself; but this could not well be done without the destruction of Simon and his family. As Simon, therefore, with two of his sons (Judas and Mattathias) were making a progress through the cities of Judea, when they came to Jericho, Ptolemy invited them to an entertainment which he had prepared for them in a castle of his own building: but while they were drinking and making merry, he caused not only them, but likewise all their attendants, to be assassinated. Having thus far succeeded in his design, the treacherous and base Ptolemy dispatched a party to Gazara, where at that time John Hyrcanus (Simon's third son) resided, with orders to put him to death. It luckily happened that Hyrcanus had heard of the fate of his father and brethren, and had received intelligence of Ptolemy's farther design of cutting him off. He was therefore prepared to receive his intended murderers, and on their arrival at Gazara, had them immediately dispatched, after which he retired for safety to the city of Jerusalem.

When the fate of Simon was known at Jerusalem, Hyrcanus was declared high-priest and prince of the Jews in the place of his father, whose death was universally lamented, and a general mourning throughout the whole country was observed on the melancholy occasion †.

With respect to the base and perfidious Ptolemy we have no farther account of him in any history, except that written by the celebrated Josephus, who gives us the following relation. That after the murder of his father-in-law Simon, he seized his wife and two of her children, and with them betook himself to the castle of Dagon in the neighbourhood of Jericho. As soon

* After Antiochus obtained the crown of Syria, he received the additional name of Sidetes, from his being remarkably fond of the diversion of hunting, the word Sidetes, in the Syrian language, signifying, *the Hunter*.

† The Author of the first Book of Maccabees, in the encomiums he bestows on Simon, tells us, that he *fought the good of the nation* in every thing, so that his authority always pleased them well: that, during his administration, whilst Syria, and other neighbouring kingdoms, were almost destroyed by wars, the Jews lived quietly, every man under his own vine and fig-tree, enjoying without fear the fruits of their labours, and beholding with pleasure the flourishing state of their country. Their trade was increased by the reduction of Joppa and other maritime places; their territories enlarged; their armies well disciplined; their towns

and fortresses well garrisoned; their religion and liberties secured; their land freed from heathen enemies and Jewish apostates; and their friendship courted by all the nations about them, even by the Romans and Lacedemonians. He observes farther, that this Simon was no less zealous for the service of God, in extirpating apostacy, superstition, idolatry, and every thing else that was contrary to the laws of God: that he was a great protector of the true Israelites, and a friend to the poor; and that he restored the service of the temple to its antient splendor. It is not therefore to be wondered at that the Jewish Sanhedrim should think no dignity or honour while he lived, nor no grief or lamentation when he was dead, too great for a man of such distinguished merit.

soon as Hyrcanus understood the place to which he had retreated he immediately marched thither and laid siege to it. In the prosecution of this enterprize the greatest difficulty Hyrcanus had to surmount was, a natural tenderness towards his mother and brethren, whom Ptolemy caused to be whipped, and otherwise publickly tormented, on the battlements, threatening to throw them down unless he immediately raised the siege. This terrible menace abated the resolution of Hyrcanus, who thought that if he prosecuted his design, the consequence would be an aggravation of cruelty to his relations. His mother, observing his embarrassment, called aloud, urging him not to consider the sufferings of herself and sons, but to avenge the injury his family had received, and expressed a willingness to expire under the most excruciating torments, on condition that the barbarous and unnatural tyrant Ptolemy should meet with a punishment proportioned to the enormity of his guilt. This instance of generosity and fortitude animated Hyrcanus to make a vigorous assault; but observing that in proportion to the force he exerted for reducing the fort, additional cruelty was exercised upon his mother, and his desire of revenge yielding to filial tenderness, the siege was protracted till the coming on of the sabbatical year, wherein the Jews were obliged to rest; so that Ptolemy, by these means, being delivered from the war and the siege (after having slain the mother and brothers of Hyrcanus) withdrew to the tyrant Zeno, surnamed Cotyla, who, at that time, had usurped to himself the government of Philadelphia.

As soon as Antiochus heard of the deaths of Simon and his sons, he resolved to make one bold attempt, which was, to reduce the whole body of the Jews, and make them subject to the government of the Syrian empire. To effect this he marched, at the head of a considerable army, into Judea, and having committed great devastation in various parts of the country, at length obliged Hyrcanus to shut himself up in Jerusalem. Antiochus immediately laid siege to the place, which he encompassed by dividing his forces into seven bodies. The siege was carried on with great resolution, and the defence of the place gallantly supported, for some time, till at length Hyrcanus, being distressed for want of provisions for so great a number of people as was then in the city, sent a messenger to Antiochus to sue for peace. Antiochus returned for answer, that he would readily comply with his request, provided he agreed to the following conditions; namely, that the besieged should deliver up their arms; that Jerusalem should be dismantled; that tribute should be paid to the king for Joppa, and the other towns which were

held by the Jews out of Judea and lastly, that, a garrison of Syrians should be constantly kept in Jerusalem. Hyrcanus agreed to all these articles, except the last, to which he objected on account of the great inconvenience that must take place from the mixing of strangers; but to compound for this matter, he offered to pay Antiochus five hundred talents, three hundred down, and to give hostages for the payment of the other two in a reasonable time. Antiochus, accepting of this offer, and the treaty being concluded, Hyrcanus invited him and his army into the city, when he gave them a splendid and most magnificent reception, and, before his departure, formed an alliance with him, engaging to give him such assistance as laid in his power whenever it should be demanded.

It was not long after this before Hyrcanus was called upon to fulfil his engagement. Antiochus had formed the resolution of rescuing his brother Demetrius from the hands of Phraortes, king of Parthia, who had long detained him a prisoner; but thinking his own forces too weak for such an enterprize, he sent to Hyrcanus, requesting him to come immediately, with a body of troops, to his assistance.

In consequence of this request Hyrcanus, who was a man of the strictest honour, immediately left Jerusalem, and marched, at the head of a considerable army, to Antioch. On his arrival there, the two armies, having formed a conjunction, proceeded on the intended enterprize, each under the command of their respective leaders; and such was their success that they defeated the Parthians in three pitched battles, and recovered Babylonia, Medea, and several other provinces, that had formerly belonged to the Syrian empire.

After these successes Antiochus, thinking himself sufficiently strong, and that he should have no farther occasion for the assistance of Hyrcanus, dismissed him, who accordingly returned with his forces to Jerusalem. Antiochus, however, resolved to continue with his army in the enemy's country during the winter, that he might be ready to compleat his conquests the ensuing spring. But this resolution proved fatal both to him and his people; for the inhabitants of the country having entered into a general conspiracy, they unexpectedly rose in one night throughout the country, and falling on the army of Antiochus, put the greater part of them to the sword, the king himself falling among the slain †.

In the mean time Demetrius, being set at liberty by Phraortes, returned to Syria, and, on his brother's death, recovered the kingdom. He did not, however, long enjoy the possession of the sovereignty, for he governed in so tyrannical

† It is to be observed that Antiochus's forces (which amounted in number to near 400,000) being dispersed all over the country, were quartered at too great a distance from each other to be able, in any moderate time, to gather together in a body; and as they had grievously oppressed the people in all places where they lay, the inhabitants took the advantage of this their disposition, and formed a conspiracy, at one and the same time, to fall upon them in several quarters, and cut their throats. This conspiracy was accordingly

carried into execution with success, and when Antiochus, with the forces he had about him, hastened to the assistance of the quarters that were near him, he was overpowered and slain; so that out of his numerous army very few escaped. Phraortes, however, (who was then king of Parthia) caused the body of Antiochus to be taken from among the dead, and having put it into a coffin, sent it to Antioch, in order that he might be honourably interred in the sepulchre of his ancestors.

nical a manner, and pursued such vicious and wicked practices, that he became universally detested by the people, who, uniting in a confederacy against him, sent proper messengers to Ptolemy Physcon, king of Egypt, requesting that he would send to them a descendant of the house of Seleucus, whom they would immediately invest with the sovereignty.

Ptolemy, who was no friend to Demetrius, readily complied with the request of the Syrians, to whom he sent Alexander, surnamed Zabina (who pretended to be the son of the late Alexander) attended by a very considerable army. In consequence of this a desperate battle took place between Alexander and Demetrius, the latter of whom being defeated, fled to Ptolemais, where Cleopatra his wife then resided. He made no doubt of finding protection here, but soon found himself mistaken, for, on his arrival, he was denied entrance into the city. Thus disappointed he betook himself for refuge to Tyre, where, falling into the hands of his enemies, they first made him a prisoner, and then put him to death.

Alexander Zabina, on the defeat and death of Demetrius, ascended the throne of Syria; but he did not long enjoy this high dignity, for Ptolemy Physcon (expecting that he should hold it in homage from him, which the other refused to do) resolved to pull him down as precipitately as he had set him up. To effect this he married his daughter Tryphœna to Antiochus Gryphus, the son of the late Demetrius, whom he furnished with a considerable army to oppose Zabina. Antiochus immediately marched into Syria, and after demolishing several principal places in his way, met Zabina at the head of his forces, whom he attacked with great resolution, killed prodigious numbers of his men, and obliged the rest to save themselves by a precipitate flight. Zabina being among the slain, the conqueror marched with his victorious army to Antioch, where, not meeting with any opposition, he took immediate possession of the Syrian throne.

During these disturbances and revolutions in Syria, Hyrcanus took the opportunity not only of enlarging his own territories, but of shaking off the Syrian yoke likewise, and making himself wholly independent. He took several cities which were unprovided with garrisons, owing to the great draughts of men made by the kings of Syria for their foreign expeditions. He subdued Sichen, the principal seat of the Samaritans, and destroyed their temple at Mount Gerezim, which Sanballat had built in compliment to his son-in-law Manasseh, the brother of Jaddus the high-priest. He likewise reduced the principal cities in Idumea, and prevailed on the people of the country to become proselytes to the Jewish religion, so that from thenceforward they were incorporated into the same church and nation, and, in time, lost the name of Idumeans, or Edomites.

After Hyrcanus had possessed himself of these places, and had made the necessary regulations for the security of them in future, he returned to Jerusalem, from whence he dispatched ambassadors to Rome to renew the league which his father Simon had made with the Senate. By these ambassadors he complained that the late Antiochus Sidetes had made war upon the Jews, contrary to what the Romans had, in their behalf, decreed in that league; that the Syrians had taken from them several cities, and made them become tributary for others, and had likewise forced them to a dishonourable peace by besieging Jerusalem.

The Senate received the ambassadors with the most distinguished respect, and after having heard the complaint of Hyrcanus against the Syrians, decreed as follows: That whatever had been done against the Jews, since the time of the late treaty with Simon, should be all null and void; that all the places, which had either been taken from them, or made tributary by the Syrians, should be restored, and made free from all homage, tribute, and other services: that, for the future, the Syrian kings should have no right to march their armies through the Jewish territories; that, for all the damages, which the Syrians had done the Jews, reparation should be made them; and that ambassadors should be sent from Rome to see this decree put in execution.

Thus was the alliance between Hyrcanus and the Romans renewed in the most ample manner, and by which the Jews obtained more advantageous privileges than they had ever enjoyed since they become subject to the Syrian monarchy.

A short time after this Hyrcanus sent his two sons, Aristobulus and Antigonus, to lay siege to Samaria. Though they were both very young, yet they set about the business with the judgment of experienced warriors, and in the prosecution of it displayed the greatest courage and magnanimity. The Samaritans defended the place with such resolution, that the siege continued for a whole year, at the close of which the besieged, being distressed for want of provisions, and having no reason to expect relief from any quarter, surrendered. In consequence of this Hyrcanus gave orders that the place should be totally demolished, which was accordingly done; after which he caused trenches to be dug in various parts across the ground where it stood, that it might not be afterwards rebuilt.

The destruction of Samaria was the last act of an hostile nature committed by Hyrcanus, who enjoyed the remainder of his life in full quiet from all foreign wars: but, towards the conclusion of it, he met with some trouble from the Pharisees, a prevailing sect among the Jews*. The popularity of these people was so great, from their pretences to extraordinary strictness in religion, that they had obtained the most distinguished

* At this period the Jews were divided into three sects, called Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes. The opinion of the Pharisees was, that, in some instances, men were left to their own will, and in others, over-ruled by a particular fate. The Sadducees held that a man's condition was in all cases

determined by his own conduct, without any interference of the deity; while the Essenes contended that an irrevocable fate over-ruled every action. In the contentions between these sects, the Sadducees were supported by the people of quality and wealth, and the Pharisees by the multitude.

distinguished reputation and interest among the multitude, whose conduct they could direct even in opposition to the sentiments of the high-priest and the heads of the nation.

This gave some uneasiness to Hyrcanus, who having been educated among the Pharisees, and being fearful lest their popularity might, in time, produce some disagreeable consequences, used various means to gain their esteem and affection. Among other measures to effect this, he one day invited several of their leading men to a splendid entertainment; and when his hospitality had caused a circulation of good humour, he arose from his seat, and addressed them in words to this effect: "Since (says he) that I profess your principles, it is scarcely necessary to observe, my friends, that my most sanguine wish is, to render myself acceptable to the Almighty, by observing a strict justice to my neighbour. If I have violated my duty, it is your business to admonish me, and it shall be mine to effect a reformation of my conduct."

As soon as Hyrcanus had finished his address, the greater part of the company respectively praised him for his administration, and gave him all the encomiums due to a brave man and worthy governor. But one of the company, named Eleazar, a man of a malignant disposition, and who had hitherto been silent, rising from his chair, deliberately addressed Hyrcanus as follows: "Having declared yourself an advocate for truth and plain-dealing, you cannot be offended if I recommend a resignation of the high-priesthood, and that you apply yourself only to the discharge of your civil authority."

Surprized at this, Hyrcanus asked Eleazar what reason he had for giving him such advice: "Because (said he) we are assured, from the testimony of the Antients among us, that your mother was a captive taken in the wars, and being, therefore the son of a strange woman, you are incapable of the office and dignity of high-priest."

As this allegation was known to be totally void of truth, the company resented it with a just indignation. Hyrcanus, in particular, was so exasperated, that he vowed revenge against the person who had uttered so base a calumny. While he was in this disposition, one Jonathan, an intimate friend of his (but a zealous Saddu-

cee) took the opportunity of endeavouring to set Hyrcanus against the whole sect of the Pharisees, and to bring him over to that of the Sadducees. To effect this he suggested to him that it was not the single act of Eleazar, but a thing concerted by the whole party; that Eleazar, in speaking it out, delivered the sentiments of the rest; and that the truth of his observation would be confirmed on demanding what punishment was due to the man who had uttered so vile a falsehood, and had slandered the prince and high-priest of his nation.

Hyrcanus took the advice of his friend Jonathan, and consulting the leaders of the Pharisees what punishment should be inflicted on the calumniator, they returned for answer, "that being a people disposed to mercy, they did not adjudge defamation to be an offence deserving death, and that they were of opinion imprisonment and whipping would be sufficient punishment."

This answer fully convinced Hyrcanus that what Jonathan had suggested was true, and from that very moment he became a mortal enemy to the whole sect of the Pharisees. He immediately abrogated their traditional constitutions, and enjoined a penalty on all who should observe them; at the same time renouncing their party, and going over to that of the Sadducees.

Having quelled this dissention, Hyrcanus enjoyed the remaining part of his life in uninterrupted peace and happiness; after having had the administration of all public affairs, both in church and state, for the space of twenty-nine years, he paid the debt of nature, leaving the high-priesthood and sovereignty to his eldest son Judas Aristobulus, who was the first that took upon him; in a formal manner, the title of king (by putting a diadem on his head) since the Babylonish Captivity.

Hyrcanus was a most excellent governor, and from his prudent management, obtained more privileges to the Jews than they had ever enjoyed since their captivity by the Babylonians. He was a strict preserver of justice, a man of distinguished probity and virtue, and directed his conduct with such prudence and impartiality in all matters of a public nature, that he justly acquired the general esteem of the people whom he governed; so that he lived respected, and died lamented.

C H A P. XV.

Aristobulus succeeds his father Hyrcanus in the government of Judea. He imprisons his mother and three of his brethren, the former of whom he causes to be starved to death. He makes war with the Ituræans, whom he subdues, and brings over to the Jewish religion. He causes his brother Antigonus to be put to death, the reflection of which, added to the murder of his mother, so affects his mind and body that he dies miserably, after having reigned only one year. He is succeeded by his brother Alexander Jannæus, who releases his other two brothers from confinement, the elder of whom he causes to be put to death. He lays siege to Ptolemais, but abandons the enterprize. He enters into a treaty with Ptolemy Lathyrus, the expelled king of Egypt, but proving perfidious, Ptolemy engages his army, defeats him, and lays waste a great part of his territories. He forms an alliance with Cleopatra (the mother of Ptolemy) queen of Egypt. He marches into Cælo-Syria, and takes Gadara, with the fortress of Amathus, but is afterwards defeated by Theodorus, the son of Zeno, prince of Philadelphia. He lays siege to Gaza, which, by the treachery of Lysimachus, he reduces, puts all the inhabitants to the sword, and totally destroys the place. He returns to Jerusalem, and is insulted by his subjects, who enter into an open rebellion against him. He marches against the Ammonites and Moabites, whom he subdues, and makes them become tributary. He is capitally defeated by one Thebas, an Arabian prince, and narrowly escapes with his life. A civil war takes place between him and his subjects, the latter of whom apply to Demetrius Eucharus, king of Damascus, for assistance. Demetrius accordingly enters Judea with a considerable army, and engaging Alexander obtains a complete victory. Alexander flies, with his scattered forces, to the mountains for safety, where, being joined by a great number of those Jews who were in arms against him under Demetrius, the latter, fearful that the rest may do the like, retires into Syria. Alexander, having taken eight hundred of his rebellious subjects, prisoners, carries them to Jerusalem, where he orders them all to be crucified, and their wives and children massacred before their faces. He dies at the siege of Ragaba, but, previous to his death, gives a political piece of advice to his queen, who, in consequence thereof, is afterwards settled in the supreme government of the nation.

ON the death of Hyrcanus, his eldest son Aristobulus succeeded him both in the high-priesthood and sovereignty, and, putting a diadem on his head, assumed the title and dignity of king. He was naturally of a very cruel and suspicious disposition, and therefore began his reign with acts that would have been disgraceful to the basest of human beings. He had, indeed, a particular regard for his next brother, whose name was Antigonus, and therefore admitted him to some share in the government; but his mother, whom he considered as his rival in the sovereignty (Hyrcanus having bequeathed to her all that was in his power to leave) he ordered into close confinement, and his three younger brethren (for Hyrcanus had five sons in all) he consigned to the same fate. So horribly cruel and unnatural was he, that he actually starved his mother to death in the prison he had placed her, and (as will appear hereafter) from some malignant and groundless insinuations, sacrificed the life of his favourite brother Antigonus.

A short time after Aristobulus had been seated on the throne of Judea, he engaged in a war

with the Ituræans*, and having subdued the greater part of the country, he compelled the inhabitants to become proselytes to the Jewish religion, in the same manner as his father had done to the Idumeans. While he was on this expedition he was taken exceeding ill, and being obliged to return to Jerusalem, left his brother Antigonus in Ituræa, with orders fully to complete the business he had so successfully begun. Antigonus strictly obeyed his brother's orders, and, after thoroughly completing the work, returned in triumph to Jerusalem, just at the time when the people were celebrating the Feast of the Tabernacles.

As soon as Antigonus entered the city the first thing he did was to enquire after the welfare of his brother; and understanding that he was still exceeding ill, he immediately repaired to the temple, attended by his guards (all of whom, as well as himself were dressed in armour just as they had come from the wars against the Ituræans) in order to supplicate heaven for the restoration of his brother's health.

This being made known to the enemies of Antigonus,

* The country of Ituræa, where these people dwelt, was a part of Cælo-Syria, situated to the north-east of Judea, and lying between the inheritance of the half tribe of Manasseh

beyond the river Jordan, and the territories of Damascus. Philip, one of Herod's sons, was tetrarch of Iturea when St. John the Baptist first entered upon his public ministry.

Antigonus, (among whom his sister-in-law the queen was one of the most inveterate) they immediately repaired to the king, telling him, it was high time to look to himself; that his brother was gone into the temple in a dress far from becoming a private man; and that, in all probability, it would not be long before he would come with a troop of his armed soldiers, and, by force of arms, divest him of the sovereignty.

Aristobulus did not give credit to all that was reported concerning his brother, but supposing there to be some foundation for a part, he determined to provide for his own safety. He immediately sent a messenger to his brother, with orders that he should put off his armour, and come to him, concluding that if, pursuant to his orders, he came unarmed, there was no mischief intended; but that, if he did otherwise there might be something in what had been suggested to him. As a necessary precaution, however, before he dispatched the messenger to Antigonus he placed his guards in a subterraneous passage that led from the palace to the temple, and through which his brother was to come to the king's apartment, ordering them, that if they saw him unarmed they should let him pass, but if otherwise, they should instantly fall on him and put him to death.

These orders being given in the presence and hearing of the base and perfidious queen, she prevailed with the messenger (whom Aristobulus sent to bid his brother come unarmed) to tell Antigonus that the king, being informed of his having a beautiful suit of armour which he had brought with him from the wars, was desirous of seeing it, and therefore required that he would come to him fully equipped in his martial dress. Antigonus, not suspecting any treachery, immediately left the temple, and proceeded towards the palace completely armed, in obedience (as he thought) to the king's commands. But as soon as he came to the place where the guards were posted, they, seeing him dressed in his armour, obeyed their orders, by immediately falling on him and putting him to death.

When Aristobulus heard of the death of Antigonus, he began seriously to repent of his cruelty in having given orders for taking away his life. The reflection of having lost a good brother brought to his remembrance the barbarous murder of his mother, and his conscience flew in his face for both at the same time. The horrors of his mind increased the distemper of his body; and so great were both that he could find no ease for the one, nor any cure for the other.

After languishing a short time in this dreadful and irremediable state, during which he expressed the most bitter accusations against himself, he at length died in the utmost agonies, just one year after he had obtained the sovereignty of Judea*.

Aristobulus was succeeded on the throne by his brother Alexander Jannæus, who had been kept in prison during the whole of the late reign; but on the decease of Aristobulus, his widow Soloma released him and his other two brothers from their confinement, and Alexander, being the eldest, she advanced to the regal dignity.

Alexander had not long been seated on the throne before he discovered that the elder of his two brothers had formed a design of supplanting him in the sovereignty. But this design he soon rendered abortive, by ordering him to be immediately put to death. The other brother, whose name was Absalom, being of a quiet and peaceable disposition, he took into his favour and protection, and having no farther emulation than that of leading a private life, he provided for him in a manner suitable to the dignity of the brother of a king.

Alexander, being now fully established on the throne of Judea, resolved to make war with the people of Ptolemais. He accordingly marched with his forces from Jerusalem for that purpose; and meeting with the army of the enemy in the way a desperate battle ensued, in which Alexander proved victorious, having killed great numbers, and obliged the rest to fly to Ptolemais for refuge. Alexander, however, pursued his conquest, and closely following with his army shut them up in the city, to which he immediately laid siege.

The city of Ptolemais, with Gaza, the Tower of Stratton, and the fortress of Dura (the latter of which was possessed by one Zoilus, a considerable officer belonging to the Syrian army) were the only places on the coast that did not belong to the territories of Judea; and of those Alexander resolved, if possible, to possess himself before he returned to Jerusalem. To effect this he separated his forces into different divisions, one of which he left to continue the siege of Ptolemais, and with the others he proceeded to ravage the territories of Gaza, and those belonging to Zoilus.

The people of Ptolemais defended themselves with great resolution, and for some time rendered all the efforts of Alexander's forces abortive. The latter, however, persevering with uncommon intrepidity, they were fearful of being at length compelled to submit, unless they could procure assistance from some foreign power.

They

* Josephus tells us that the distemper of Aristobulus (after reflecting on the murders of his mother and brother) was increased by a violent vomiting of blood; after which he relates the following incident. That as an attendant was conveying some of the blood away in a vessel he spilt a part of it on the very spot where Antigonus had been slain, and where the stains of his blood were still to be perceived. The spectators, imagining this to be the effect of design, and intended as an oblation to the manes of the deceased prince, so loudly expressed their surprise as to be overheard by the king, who instantly enquired the cause: but as he became anxious to be informed, the people about him were the more desirous of

concealing it. However, by the force of threats and entreaties, he at length prevailed on them to tell him: but his desire was no sooner complied with than, shedding abundance of tears, and fetching a deep sigh, he broke out into the following exclamation: "The all-seeing power hath detected my iniquity, and my brother's murder hath called down the vengeance of heaven upon me. How long shall I hold that life which is forfeited to the blood of a mother and a brother? Rather, why do I not expire on a sudden than thus yield my life drop by drop, as if the severest punishment was inadequate to my guilt?" Soon after uttering these words he gave up the ghost.

They had no hopes of relief but from Egypt, and their principal dependance was upon Ptolemy Lathyrus †, who having been compelled to evacuate his kingdom by his mother Cleopatra, had retired to Cyprus. They accordingly sent ambassadors to Ptolemy, requesting his assistance against Alexander, at the same time assuring him there was every reason to believe the people of Gaza and Ptolemais would declare in his favour immediately on his entering Syria, and that he would be supported by Zoilus, the Sydonians, and other neighbouring people. Ptolemy sent word by the ambassadors that he would comply with their request, and gave immediate orders for all possible dispatch to be made in the equipment of a fleet for this enterprize.

While the ambassadors were gone to execute this business, one Demenetus, a man of considerable interest among the people of Ptolemais, reflecting that the steps they had taken might be productive of ill consequences, assembled the people together, whom he addressed in words to this effect: "The point in question (said he) is, whether it will be most eligible to abide the event of the war, or to accept of the relief we have requested; for if we put ourselves under the protection of Ptolemy, inevitable slavery must be the consequence. Danger is also greatly to be apprehended from Egypt, for it is not to be imagined that Cleopatra will remain inactive while Ptolemy is preparing for war. She will send a powerful army to pursue and attack him unprepared. Besides, the queen is determined to drive him out of Cyprus; and when she finds him engaged in strengthening his interest with the neighbouring provinces, she will seize the opportunity to effect her purpose. To give the argument another turn, let us suppose that Ptolemy will be driven back to Cyprus; we shall then be left without succour, and he will have dangers to encounter that he may not at present apprehend."

This address destroyed the hopes that had been entertained by the people of the success of their embassy, and of which Ptolemy was informed during his passage; but notwithstanding this he resolved to proceed on his voyage, and engage in the enterprize to which he had been invited.

Ptolemy disembarked his forces at a place called Sicamin, from whence he marched, at the head of about thirty thousand horse and foot, towards Ptolemais. When he came within some distance of the place, he dispatched ambassadors to inform them of his arrival and situation; but, to his great surprize, they refused to receive the message, or to hold any intercourse either with him or his agents. This disappointment greatly

embarrassed Ptolemy, who, while he was considering what measures were the most eligible to pursue, received a message from Zoilus and the people of Gaza, requesting that he would immediately come and assist them against Alexander, who was committing great depredations in their territories, and whose forces were too powerful for them to subdue.

This solicitation was very agreeable to Ptolemy, who immediately marched his army to their relief; but Alexander, not thinking it advisable to hazard an engagement with them, withdrew his army, and placed them in winter quarters.

Alexander, though he had raised the siege of Ptolemais, and had got with him all his troops, knew he was unable to cope with Ptolemy, and therefore thought of effecting that by policy, which he could not attain by force. To this purpose he entered into a treaty with Lathyrus, engaging to pay him four hundred talents of silver on condition that he would deliver Zoilus and his territories into his hands. This Lathyrus agreed to do, and accordingly, soon after, got Zoilus into his custody; but being informed that, at this very time, Alexander was clandestinely treating with his mother Cleopatra to bring her upon him with all her forces, detesting his double dealing, broke off all friendship with him, and resolved, in future, to consider him as a perfidious man, and a dangerous enemy, and to do him all the injury that laid in his power.

In consequence of this dissention Ptolemy marched with his forces into Galilee, and possessed himself of several principal places belonging to Alexander. Among these was Asochis, which he took by assault, and from whence he acquired a very immense booty.

Having subdued Asochis Ptolemy, elated with success, made an assault upon Sepphoris, but in this attempt he was defeated and sustained great loss. He then led his army against Alexander, whom he met with in the neighbourhood of Asophus, a small distance from the banks of the river Jordan, and pitched his camp opposite to that of the enemy. The van of Alexander's army was composed of eight thousand men provided with brazen bucklers. In the front of Ptolemy's forces were some warriors equipped in the same manner; but his followers were not in general so well armed as their adversaries, and were therefore the less anxious to come to an engagement. Philostephanus, a man of great military skill and experience; and the chief officer under Ptolemy, seeing the greater part of the forces appeared intimidated, gave them all the encouragement he could, telling them that if they behaved courageously there was no doubt but they would easily conquer their adversaries, and

† Ptolemy Lathyrus was made king of Egypt by his mother Cleopatra, but by his attempting to reign without her, he so far incurred her displeasure, that she procured his expulsion, which (according to Justin) she effected by the following artifice. She caused some of her eunuchs to be wounded, and bringing them out before the people pretended that they had suffered this from Lathyrus in defence of her person against him, and therefore accused him of

having made an attempt on her life. By these means she so far incensed the people against Lathyrus, that they rose in a general uproar against him, and would certainly have put him to death had he not fled for safety. Hereupon Cleopatra sent for Alexander, her younger son, who for some time had reigned in Cyprus, and having made him king of Egypt, forced Lathyrus to be content with the government of the place which had been left by his brother.

and that their attempts would be crowned with every wish-for success.

Ptolemy now crossed the river Jordan at the head of his forces; and to this movement Alexander, who was stationed on the opposite shore, made no opposition, judging that he should with less difficulty obtain a conquest if he could attack the enemy while they were in a situation from which the river behind must render a precipitate retreat utterly impracticable. When the two armies met a most desperate battle ensued, which, for some time, was sustained with great bravery by both parties. At length, on a body of Ptolemy's troops giving way, victory seemed to favour Alexander; but on the arrival of Philostephanus with a reinforcement, the Jews were entirely routed, no less than 30,000 being slain on the spot, and the rest compelled to save themselves by a precipitate flight §.

The conquest obtained by Ptolemy over Alexander's army, and the ravages he made both before and after in different parts of the Jewish territories, coming to the ears of Cleopatra, the mother of Ptolemy, she was fearful lest so much success should make him powerful enough, and his ambition direct his inclinations, to attempt invading Egypt. To stop him, therefore, in time, she set out with a large fleet and a numerous army, which she landed in Phœnicia, and immediately proceeded to Ptolemais, not doubting but the people would readily open their gates to her; but finding the contrary she immediately invested the place, resolved to reduce them by force of arms.

Ptolemy no sooner heard of this than, imagining it would be no difficult matter to recover Egypt in the absence of his mother and her army, he left Syria, and made all the haste he could upon that expedition; but meeting with more opposition than he expected (owing to the prudent management of those with whom his mother had entrusted the government during her absence) he was obliged to return to Gaza, where he passed the winter, and, in the beginning of the ensuing spring, not chusing to engage in any farther enterprize, he returned to Cyprus.

In the mean time Cleopatra continued the siege of Ptolemais, and at length made herself mistress of it by assault. As soon as Alexander was informed of this, he immediately repaired to her with many valuable presents, and was kindly received, the queen considering him as an unhappy prince, who had no other person but her to fly to for protection. Some of the principal persons about the queen observed that she had now an excellent opportunity of seizing both on Alexander and his dominions, and strongly advised her to embrace it. This advice she would certainly have followed, had it not been for Ananias, one of her generals, who by birth was a Jew, and by descent a relation to Alexander. He represented to her the great danger, as well as injustice, of such a procedure; how injurious

it would be to her own honour, which, on no consideration whatever, ought to be tarnished; how prejudicial to her interest by provoking all the Jews in the world against her; and how contrary to the rules of faith and common honesty (which should be observed among all mankind) it would be to treat a friend and ally with such perfidy. These arguments had the desired effect: the queen immediately laid aside all thoughts of such a procedure, and instead thereof concluded an amicable alliance with Alexander, immediately after which she returned with her army to Egypt.

Alexander, being no longer in dread of the power of Ptolemy, marched with his army into Cœlo-Syria, and invested Gadara, which, after a siege of ten months, he subdued. He then proceeded to Amathus, the strongest fortress on that side the river Jordan, and where Theodorus, the son of Zeno prince of Philadelphia, had deposited all his treasure. This place he likewise reduced, and possessed himself of all the riches of Theodorus; but the latter, falling on him by surprise as he was returning from the conquest, totally routed his army, slew ten thousand of his men, and not only recovered his treasures, but likewise obtained a considerable booty by Alexander's baggage, which, from the danger that threatened him, he was obliged to leave in the field of battle.

Alexander, however, was far from being discouraged at this misfortune. The next year he marched with his forces over the river Jordan, and after taking several neighbouring places, laid siege to Gaza, with a design, if he took it, severely to punish the inhabitants, in revenge for their having formerly solicited Ptolemy to assist them in repulsing him. Apollodotus, who commanded the town, made a gallant defence, and, from his courage and conduct, the army of Alexander nearly escaped being totally destroyed. He one night made an intrepid sally, at the head of ten thousand men, on the camp of the enemy, who, (supposing Ptolemy had come to the relief of the besieged) were greatly disconcerted, and in their confusion many were slain; but when day-light discovered their mistake they immediately rallied, and charged Apollodotus with such fury, that great numbers of his men were slain, and he, with the rest, obliged to fly with all expedition into the city.

Notwithstanding this defeat, together with being threatened with a famine, the people of Gaza were determined to encounter all difficulties rather than submit to the enemy; and they were encouraged to persist in this resolution by Aretas, an Arabian prince, who had promised to come, at the head of a large body of forces, to their assistance. But before his arrival the place was reduced, owing to the base treachery of Lyfimachus, brother to Apollodotus, who, envying the credit and esteem which his brother had gained in the defence of the place, first murdered

§ We are told, both by Strabo and Nicolaus, that after this shocking carnage, Ptolemy went to some villages belonging to the Jews, and commanded his soldiers to murder the women and children, and then put their bodies into vessels of water which were to be placed over fires: and that he

had recourse to this bloody stratagem in order to strike terror into those who had escaped by flight, by making them think that his army was accustomed to feed on the flesh of the enemy.

dered him, and then treacherously delivered up the city to Alexander.

As soon as Alexander entered the city, he gave full licence to his soldiers to kill, plunder and destroy all that fell in their way, so that the most dreadful scene of barbarity took place that can be conceived. The inhabitants, finding they were to have no quarter, stood upon their defence, and sold their lives at so dear a rate, that in the general carnage Alexander lost nearly as many of his own men as he killed of the enemy. Some of the inhabitants set fire to their own houses that they might not be plundered by the troops of Alexander; and some went even so far as to kill their wives and children, rather choosing that they should die in freedom than live in bondage. The senators who were in council when Alexander entered the city, fled to the temple of Apollo for sanctuary, in which they were all cruelly put to death, and the temple reduced to ashes. In short, the whole was one continued scene of the most horrid destruction and barbarity, and before Alexander left the place he had the horrid satisfaction of seeing this antient and famous city reduced to utter ruin and desolation.

During these transactions some material revolutions took place in the court of Syria; the first of which was the death of Antiochus Gryphus, who was assassinated by one Horacleon, (a principal officer of his army) in the twenty-ninth year of his sovereignty, and forty-fifth of his age. He was succeeded in the government by his son Seleucus, who, soon after his accession, engaged in a war with his uncle Antiochus Cyzicenus, whom he defeated in battle, and afterwards put to death. After the decease of Cyzicenus, his son Antiochus, surnamed Eusebes, being greatly beloved by the people, was crowned king at Arad. He immediately declared war against Seleucus, whom he defeated and drove out of Syria. Seleucus fled to Cilicia, and notwithstanding he was received in the most friendly manner by the people who readily admitted him as their sovereign, yet he treated them with great tyranny, and laid on them the most oppressive taxes, at which they were so incensed that they set fire to the palace, and he and his attendants perished in the flames; so that Antiochus Eusebes was left sole monarch of the Syrian empire.—But to return to Alexander.

After the destruction of Gaza Alexander returned with his forces to Jerusalem, where he found things in a very different situation to what he had expected, for the people, being incensed at his conduct, were ripe for an open rebellion, of which they very soon gave him a demonstrative instance. It happened, soon after his return, to be the time for celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles, during which it was a custom among the Jews to carry in their hands branches of palm and lemon-trees. While Alexander was offering the usual sacrifices as high-priest, the people, who were assembled in the temple, had the insolence to throw citrons at him, and to make use of very opprobrious language, telling him he was a slave, and unworthy to go up to the holy altar to offer solemn sacrifices.

This treatment enraged Alexander to such a degree, that he immediately left the temple,

and ordering his soldiers to fall on the people, no less than six thousand were instantly put to death. After this he caused the court of the priests (in which stood the altar and temple) to be surrounded with a wooden partition; to prevent the people from coming near him while he was officiating as high-priest; and, to secure his person against all future attempts, (not daring to trust to his own countrymen) he took guards into his pay from Pisidia and Cilicia, the number of whom amounted to six thousand.

Having, by these means, in some measure, put a stop to the tumults at home, Alexander marched with his forces in pursuit of new conquests, and in a short time reduced most of the principal places belonging to the Moabites and Ammonites, whom he obliged to enter into articles for being tributary to him and his successors. After this Alexander resolved to make another attempt to reduce the strong fortress of Amathus, and for that purpose marched with his forces towards the place; but Theodorus, being apprized of his intentions, and not choosing to hazard a contest with him, removed all his treasure, and withdrew the garrison before his arrival; so that Alexander, finding it in a defenceless state, and uninhabited, immediately laid it in ruins.

The next expedition Alexander took was against Thebas, one of the Arabian kings, who had encamped with a considerable army near Gadara, which afforded the most advantageous situations for ambuscades. In this place Alexander was attacked by surprise, and being driven into a valley of considerable depth, the greater part of his army was cut to pieces, and it was with the utmost difficulty himself escaped falling a sacrifice.

This defeat greatly added to the hatred which the Jews had already conceived against Alexander, who no sooner returned with the remains of his army to Jerusalem, than they immediately flew into open rebellion against him. In consequence of this a civil war commenced that continued for six years, during which, in most encounters, Alexander had the advantage of his subjects, and (according to Josephus) in the course of that time no less than 30,000 Jews were put to death.

Alexander, now reflecting on the state of affairs, began to be exceedingly uneasy, being conscious to himself that repeated conquests over his subjects must necessarily weaken him against the power of the common enemy. He therefore determined to decline all farther endeavours to bring his subjects to obedience by the force of arms, and to adopt the more gentle methods of argument and persuasion. But this change of conduct served only to increase the popular enmity; and, upon his asking the people one day what conduct they would wish him to pursue, whereby he might give them satisfaction and procure their friendship and esteem, they, with one voice, replied, "That he should cut his own throat, for upon no other terms would they be at peace with him; and well it would be (they said) considering the great mischiefs he had done them, if they would be reconciled to him, even after he was in his grave."

In short, the people would not hearken to any mode of accommodation whatever; but, on the

Contrary, were universally determined to oppose Alexander with all their might, and, if possible, do themselves justice by force of arms. To effect this, they sent deputies to Demetrius Eucærus, who was then king of Damascus, requesting that he would send them succours to oppose their sovereign, and promising him, should they succeed, to invest him with the most distinguished privileges.

In conformity to this request Demetrius marched with a considerable army into Judea, where being joined by that of the Jews, he encamped in the neighbourhood of Sichar, the whole number of his forces amounting to 3000 horse, and 40,000 foot. Alexander marched against this formidable army with only one thousand horse, six thousand mercenary foot, and about ten thousand Jews, who still maintained their allegiance. While the two armies were encamped within sight of each other they both made use of the same kind of means to take advantage, and encrease their strength. Demetrius endeavoured to induce Alexander's mercenaries to desert and join him; and Alexander was equally solicitous to gain over the Jews in the army of Demetrius, but neither party was able to prevail. At length a desperate battle took place, which was supported with great courage and resolution for some time, when victory declared in favour of Demetrius. All the foreign troops of Alexander were lost to a man, and the greatest part of his other forces were so miserably broken, that he was obliged to fly with them for shelter to the adjacent mountains.

The event of this victory, however, was contrary to the expectations of both kings; for six thousand of the Jews, who had fought against Alexander, being now moved to compassionate his sufferings, fled to, and joined their king, in the mountains, whither he had retreated for refuge. This circumstance proved exceedingly alarming to Demetrius, who, apprehending that the rest of the Jews in his army might follow the example of those who had deserted, and being content with the first advantage he had gained, abandoned all thoughts of continuing the war; and, drawing off his forces, retired into Syria, leaving the Jews to combat with their king without his assistance.

After the departure of Demetrius, the Jews continued to prosecute the war against Alexander, and in most encounters that took place the latter was victorious, notwithstanding which he could not, by any means whatever, bring them to listen to terms of accommodation. At length, however, he came to a decisive battle with them, cutting off the greater part, and obliging the rest to fly for safety to a place called Bethome, which was fortified both by nature and artifice. Alexander laid close siege to the place, which the Jews, for some time, defended with great resolution, till at length, through the perseverance and intrepidity of Alexander's forces, they were compelled to submit; great numbers were killed, many others saved themselves by flight, and eight hundred were made prisoners, whom Alexander immediately conducted to Jerusalem.

As soon as Alexander arrived at Jerusalem with his rebellious captives, he caused such a scene to be exhibited that shewed what excess of passion

men may be hurried into when they cease to make the principles of piety, honour and virtue, the rule of their conduct. The eight hundred men, whom he had brought prisoners from Bethome, he caused to be crucified all in one day, and, to increase the horrors of the dreadful scene, he ordered their wives and children to be put to death before their faces, while they were undergoing their sufferings. He likewise made an entertainment for his wives and concubines within sight of the spot where this dismal tragedy was exhibited, with an intent not only to feast himself, but them likewise, with the horrid sight. This savage and unheard-of cruelty was so noticed even by the people of his own party, that they branded his name with infamy, and he was justly considered, by all his subjects, as a monster, who, instead of being suffered to have the government of a people, ought, in the most ignominious manner, to be deprived of his existence.

The civil wars being over, Alexander led his forces against Antiochus king of Damascus, who had entered Judea with an army of eight hundred horse and eight thousand foot. They met near a place called Antipatris, where a most bloody battle ensued, in which Antiochus had so much the advantage that he thought himself secure of victory. But in this he was mistaken; for, observing one of the wings of his troops in danger of being overpowered, he eagerly pressed to its relief, and was killed in the attempt, at which his troops were so dispirited that they threw down their arms and fled, leaving Alexander master of the field.

A short time after this Aretas (whom the people of Damascus had elected king instead of Antiochus) entered Judea with a considerable army, and encamped in the neighbourhood of Adida. Alexander marched with his forces against him, and a battle ensued, which lasted for some time, but was terminated without any compleat victory being obtained on either side. After the battle was over Aretas offered terms of accommodation to Alexander, which being accepted, a treaty of peace was concluded between them, and they separated their armies, Aretas returning to Damascus, and Alexander marching his forces in pursuit of new conquests.

The first place Alexander subdued after this was the city of Dion, which he took by assault. From hence he proceeded to Gerasa, a very strong town fortified by a triple circumvallation. He laid siege to the place with great violence, and the inhabitants defended it, for some time, with amazing resolution; but at length they were obliged to submit. This conquest was of great advantage to Alexander who found in the town immense treasures which had been deposited there for safety by Theodorus, the son of Zeno, prince of Philadelphia.

After the reduction of Gerasa Alexander marched his forces against Gaulana and the strong fortress of Gamala, both of which he conquered by storm. He then took several other strong places in the neighbouring territories, and, after an expedition of three years continuance, returned to Jerusalem. The successes he had met with during his excursion were highly pleasing to the multitude, and in consequence thereof, the

disput

disgust they had before held against him subsided, so that, on his entrance into the city, they received him with the loudest acclamations of joy.

After this Alexander became violently addicted to intemperance, and having at a certain time drank to great excess, he fell sick, and was afterwards seized with a quartan ague, which was so powerful as to baffle the skill of his most eminent physicians. He was afflicted with this distemper for three years, during which time he not only continued his attention to the affairs of government, but likewise prosecuted several military undertakings, till, being at length quite exhausted, he was forced to submit to fate while he was besieging the castle of Ragaba, in the country of the Garasens.

At the besieging of this place his queen Alexandra attended him on account of his illness; and when she found he drew near his end she was greatly perplexed in her mind on account of the ill state in which she and her children must be inevitably left after his decease. She knew how much Alexander had exasperated the Pharisees, then a powerful sect among the Jews, and what hatred great numbers of the principal people among the other sects, at their instigation, had contracted against him; and therefore she had no other expectations, or prospect before her, but that herself and family would be given up to destruction, and made victims to the public rage of the people. In the height of these melancholy reflections, and while she was sitting by the bed-side of her dying husband, she broke out into the following exclamation: "My beloved husband (said she) what will be the fate of your wife and children if we are deprived of your protection, and left to the mercy of your inveterate foes!"

These words afflicted the soul of the dying Alexander, who, after having so far recovered himself as to be able to speak, gave his wife the following advice, and which were the last words he was heard to utter. "I particularly request (said he) that you strictly follow the directions I am now about to give you. As the only effectual means to secure a peaceable succession to yourself and children keep my decease a profound secret from the army till the castle

"shall be subdued: then repair in triumph to Jerusalem with the news of victory; and let your principal care be to ingratiate yourself into the esteem of the Pharisees, for your future welfare will depend principally on the interest you form with that sect, to whose opinions those of the multitude are entirely subservient. The popular clamour against me has been raised by an opposition to them. On your arrival at Jerusalem send for the principal men among the Pharisees, expose my dead body before them, and say, that from a veneration for their piety and justice, you resign the body, either to be allowed the ceremony of interment, or to be treated with contempt and indignity, as their discretion shall dictate; and at the same time assure them that in this and all other matters of a public nature, you will observe an implicit obedience to their authority. Follow this counsel, and there is no doubt but my remains will be favourably interred, and yourself and offspring be established in the dignities of the royal station."

Soon after Alexander had given this advice to his queen, he gave up the ghost, in the 49th year of his age and 27th of his sovereignty.

It was not long after the death of Alexander before the castle of Ragaba was entirely reduced; upon which the queen, in conformity to the advice of her deceased husband, immediately repaired to Jerusalem, and delivered his body to the Pharisees to be disposed of as they should think expedient; at the same time submitting the administration of all public affairs to their discretion. This conduct acquired Alexandra the warmest friendship of the Pharisees, who had hitherto been her most inveterate enemies. They harangued the multitude in her favour, at the same time extolling the merits of the late king; which had such an effect on the multitude, that instead of the usual invectives against him, nothing was heard but the highest encomiums. In short, all deplored the loss of so valiant a prince, and honoured his funeral with more than ordinary pomp and solemnity. All approved of the Queen-Dowager, who, in conformity to her husband's will, was quietly settled in the supreme government of the nation.

C H A P. XVI.

Alexandra, the Queen-Regent of Judea, appoints her eldest son Hyrcanus to the High-Priesthood. The Pharisees, having the ascendancy over the queen, direct the principal management of all public affairs. They abolish the decree of John Hyrcanus against their traditionary constitutions, and persecute the friends and adherents of the late king. Aristobulus, the brother of Hyrcanus, goes, with some of the most eminent men, to remonstrate with the queen against the conduct of the Pharisees, in consequence of which, at their request, she gives them possession of several strong places. The Jews are greatly alarmed on being invaded by Tigranes, king of Armenia, but their fears are soon removed, for, on their making him presents, he withdraws his forces. Aristobulus leads an army against his brother Hyrcanus, but on their meeting a treaty is formed between them, by which Hyrcanus resigns the office of high-priest, together with the sovereignty, to his brother Aristobulus. Hyrcanus, assisted by Aretas, king of Arabia, defeats Aristobulus, after which they both make their appeal to Pompey. Aristobulus takes up arms against Pompey, who reduces Jerusalem, restores Hyrcanus to the sovereignty, and carries Aristobulus, with his family, prisoners to Rome. Gabinius, the Roman governor in Syria, confirms Hyrcanus in the high-priesthood, and takes the civil administration out of the hands of the Sanhedrim. Aristobulus, having made his escape from Pompey, goes into Judea, and attempts to raise fresh disturbances, but is taken prisoner and again sent to Rome, where he dies by poison. Julius Cæsar confirms Hyrcanus in the government of Judea, and restores the civil administration into the hands of the Sanhedrim.

WHEN Alexander Jannæus died he left two sons, the eldest of whom was named Hyrcanus, and the other Aristobulus; but he did not appoint either of them as his successor in the sovereignty, leaving that to his queen Alexandra. Hyrcanus, on account of his seniority, she promoted to the dignity of High-Priest; and as he was naturally of an indolent and yielding disposition, she thought she might advance him to the throne without danger; but Aristobulus, the younger brother, being of an active and enterprising disposition, she deemed it most prudent to keep in a private station.

Alexandra was well skilled in the arts of government, and had abilities equal to the greatest undertakings. She augmented the militia to the full complement, kept two armies of regular troops, and had a considerable body of foreign auxiliaries in constant pay; so that by these means she became powerful at home and formidable to the neighbouring nations.

But notwithstanding this prudent management, Alexandra was little more than a mere tool in the hands of the Pharisees; for though she had the name of sovereign, the administration of all public affairs was conducted at their discretion. The queen was very rigid in her religious principles, and entertained an high degree of veneration for the Pharisees on account of the reputed sanctity of their lives. By a plausibility of conduct they so far insinuated themselves into her favour as to engross all the privileges and powers of sovereignty, and secured to themselves all the lucrative commissions and distinguished employments, leaving the queen to provide for the expences and encounter the cares and difficulties of government.

The Pharisees having obtained this power, and knowing that their conduct would not be impeached by Alexandra, proceeded to acts both of a tyrannical and a cruel nature. The first thing they did was, to abolish the decree which had been made by John Hyrcanus (father-in-law of the queen) against their traditionary constitutions. They next released all the prisoners, and recalled all the exiles, who had been concerned with them in the late civil wars; after which they demanded justice of the queen against all those, at whose instigation and advice the eight hundred rebels had been crucified in Jerusalem.

The infatuated queen readily complied with every request made by the Pharisees; in consequence of which they exhibited articles of impeachment against one Diogenes, a noted confidant of the late king, whom they condemned and executed. They proceeded in like manner against several others, and, under the pretext of justice, put all those to death who were so unfortunate as to incur their displeasure. At length the leading men among them who had been the late king's friends and adherents, seeing no likelihood of there being an end to such persecutions, and not knowing how soon they themselves might become victims to the rage of the Pharisees, went in a body to the queen, with Aristobulus, her younger son, at the head of them, to remonstrate against such proceedings.

The adherents of Aristobulus, having obtained an audience of the queen, laid before her their grievances in the most pitiable and affecting manner, while Aristobulus manifested by his countenance the abhorrence he entertained of the

the public measures. They represented to her that, in the utmost extremity of danger they had preserved an uniform loyalty to their late sovereign, who had generously rewarded their services; and therefore earnestly begged, that since they had escaped the perils of war they might not be sacrificed to the malevolence and treachery of their domestic enemies. They told her, that if their persecutors would proceed no farther in their sanguinary purpose, they would, from a respect to their superiors, suppress future complaints on what had been already perpetrated. They observed, that to countenance the declared enemies of her deceased consort, at the expence of his approved friends, would be a severe reproach upon her honour; and Aretas, the Arabian king, and several other hostile princes, would enjoy a peculiar pleasure in hearing that she had driven from her court those men who had once been so powerful that their very names had formerly struck a terror into their enemies. They concluded by saying, that if she was determined to yield every consideration to the ambition of the Pharisees, and that no regard was to be paid to their past services, they had only one request to make, and that was that they might be permitted to retire into the different fortresses of the kingdom, where they would terminate a miserable existence, honourably sharing the common calamities which seemed to await the friends of the deceased king.

These expostulations greatly embarrassed the queen, who, for some time, knew not how to act, being fearful, if she should give countenance to the petitioners she might obtain the ill-will of the Pharisees, of whom she continually stood in dread. At length, however, she resolved on complying with their last request, and therefore ordered them to retire to the several garrisons and places of strength throughout the kingdom; but with this restriction, that they should not enter Hyrcania, Alexandria, or Macheras, because in those places she had deposited her jewels and other valuable treasures.

While affairs were in this situation Alexandra received intelligence that Tigranes, king of Armenia, had marched with a considerable army into Syria, and that his design was to penetrate into Judea. In consequence of this alarming intelligence the queen immediately dispatched ambassadors to Tigranes with considerable presents, hoping thereby to procure his friendship and avert the impending danger that threatened her dominions. The ambassadors found him laying close siege to Ptolemais, which, after some time, he reduced. Being introduced to Tigranes in form (for he was a man of great pride and state) they were very favourably received: he readily accepted their presents, assuring them of his good inclinations, and said he considered himself highly honoured by the queen's sending an embassy to him at so great a distance. But the true reason of all this civility was, his having received advice that Lucullus, the Roman general, had entered Armenia, and was putting the country under military contributions; so that he was obliged immediately to draw his forces from Ptolemais, and return with all expedition in order to take the necessary measures for the better security of his own dominions.

Some time after this Alexandra being seized with a dangerous illness, Aristobulus thought it a favourable opportunity for him to carry into execution the design he had long formed of supplanting his brother Hyrcanus, both in the priesthood and sovereignty, the former of which he then enjoyed, and the latter must of course fall to him on the death of his mother. Having communicated his design to his wife (whom with his children he left in Jerusalem) he one night privately left the city, attended only by one servant; and, having visited all the castles in which his father's friends had been placed in garrison, he, in the course of fifteen days, secured to his interest twenty of those fortresses, and thereby, in a manner, made himself master of the rest of the strength of the kingdom.

On the day after Aristobulus left Jerusalem his absence was known by Alexandra, who, however, did not entertain any idea of his intentions, till she was informed that several fortresses had submitted to him; for, when one place had accepted his proposals, the example was readily followed by the rest.

As soon as the queen and her party received intelligence of the proceedings and success of Aristobulus, they were thrown into the greatest consternation, judging him, from his great abilities, and naturally aspiring disposition, to be a man qualified to succeed in the enterprize he had undertaken; and they were farther alarmed by the dreadful apprehension that they should be called to a severe account for the barbarities they had exercised upon his friends. The first step Hyrcanus and his adherents took was, to seize the wife and children of Aristobulus, whom they confined under a strong guard in the citadel next the temple. They then repaired to the queen, requesting that she would give them directions what farther measures they should pursue at so critical a juncture. They informed her of the great power of Aristobulus, and told her that though their situation was desperate, and ruin likely to ensue, yet they would not, by any means, act without her concurrence. She replied, that the state of her mind and body rendered her wholly incapable of the cares of government, which she resigned entirely to their management; adding, that there was no deficiency either of men or money. Soon after having said this, Alexandra gave up the ghost, in the 73d year of her age, and ninth of her reign, leaving all her wealth and possessions, together with the sovereignty, to her son Hyrcanus.

In the mean time Aristobulus was become exceeding powerful, and such prodigious numbers of people flocked to him from all quarters, that he had got together a considerable army. The inhabitants of Mount Libanus, Trachonitis, and other neighbouring places, were readily inclined to support his party, from the expectation of the advantages they should derive, by assisting in the establishment of a new king, who, they had reason to expect, would remove that tyranny and cruelty which had been exercised in the late reign.

Hyrcanus by the advice of his friends determined, if possible, to reduce the usurper by force, for which purpose he left Jerusalem at the head of a considerable body of forces, and the

two armies met on the plains of Jericho. The necessary preparations were made on both sides to determine the contest by the sword; but just as they were ready to engage, the greater part of Hyrcanus's forces deserted and went over to Aristobulus. In consequence of this the two brothers entered into a treaty of accommodation, the terms of which were that Hyrcanus should make a resignation of the crown and high-priesthood to Aristobulus, who was to allow him the privileges, honours, and dignity, to which he had a right by virtue of his relationship to the king. This agreement was ratified in the temple, in the presence of the people; after which Aristobulus retired to the palace, and Hyrcanus to the apartments which had been before occupied by his brother.

Hyrcanus was naturally a very quiet and peaceable man, and an admirer of ease and retirement; so that his resignation of the crown was not so great a grievance to himself as it was to many of his friends, particularly one named Antipater, who had long entertained a violent hatred against Aristobulus. Antipater was a native of Idumæa, and, in point of family and wealth, one of the most considerable men of the country. He told Hyrcanus that so long as he continued in Judea his life would be in danger, and that he had no other choice left but either to reign or die; and therefore advised him to make his escape to Aretas king of Arabia, and with him to stipulate for the assistance of forces to enable him to recover his kingdom.

The natural timidity of Hyrcanus's temper made him not listen to the advice of Antipater with that liveliness which might have arisen from a man of a more aspiring disposition, though at the same time he did not make any absolute refusal. Antipater, however, was determined, if possible to carry his point, and therefore did that for Hyrcanus which he could no have done for himself. He immediately repaired to Aretas, to whom (from his great power and influence) he was readily admitted, and kindly received. To this prince he represented Aristobulus as a most abominable character, and recommended Hyrcanus as a man of the most extraordinary merit: he exhorted him not to deny succour to a prince who was most cruelly oppressed, observing at the same time that he would obtain great honour from generously affording Hyrcanus relief, and that kings were reciprocally bound to support each other in their legal claims and privileges. Aretas promised to comply with his request, on condition that Hyrcanus, in case of victory, should restore those towns which had been taken from his father A-

lexander; upon which Antipater took his leave and returned to Jerusalem.

Antipater, having prepared Hyrcanus to petition, and Aretas to comply with his request, conducted the latter out of the city by night, and accompanied him to Petra, where the royal palace of Arabia was situated. On his arrival there, he introduced Hyrcanus to the king, and strongly recommended him to his protection. The king received him very kindly, and Hyrcanus giving him his word to comply with the conditions he had mentioned to Antipater, Aretas promised to use his utmost endeavours for restoring him to the regal dignity.

Aretas was as good as his word, for he soon after entered Judea with an army of fifty thousand men, who, being joined with the Jews that were of Hyrcanus's party, gave battle to Aristobulus, and having obtained a complete victory, pursued him to Jerusalem. On his arrival there he laid close siege* to the city and temple (in the latter of which Aristobulus took shelter) and would certainly have taken it, had it not been for the following incident.

At this time a war was subsisting between Pompey the Great and Tigranes, king of Armenia, the former ordered Scaurus, one of his lieutenants, to lead the Army under his command from Armenia into Syria. Scaurus obeyed the orders of his master, but on his arrival at Damascus he found that Metellus and Lellius had reduced the place and drawn off their forces. In consequence of this, and having received intelligence of the situation of affairs in Judea, he thought it most adviseable to lead his army into that country, which he accordingly did. On his way he was met by two ambassadors, one from Aristobulus, and the other from Hyrcanus, who were commissioned to supplicate the Romans to espouse the cause of their respective masters. The ambassador from Aristobulus presented Scaurus with four hundred talents, which sum prevailed above all the arguments that could be used by the other ambassador in favour of Hyrcanus. In consequence of this Scaurus dispatched messengers to Hyrcanus and Aretas, commanding them, in the name of Pompey the Great and the Roman Senate, immediately to raise the siege and draw off their troops, threatening them with a declaration of war in case of refusal. Aretas, dreading the indignation of so powerful a people as the Romans, immediately raised the siege, and marching his forces through Judea, retired to Philadelphia, while Scaurus returned with his troops to Damascus. Aristobulus, however, was of too enterprising a disposition to repress the desire of conquest, because

* While Aretas laid before Jerusalem he suffered many acts to be committed of a very outrageous and barbarous nature, one of which is thus related by Josephus. There lived at Jerusalem one Onias, a man of great reputation for the sanctity of his life, and who, by his prayers, had been thought to have once obtained rain from heaven in an extremity of drought. The besiegers having heard this, and imagining that his curses might be as prevalent as his prayers, brought him into the camp, and there pressed him to curse Aristobulus and all that were with him. He opposed their request as long as he could; but at length, finding no rest

from their importunities, and that they were resolved to mal-treat him unless he complied, he lifted up his hands to heaven, and, as he was standing in the midst of them, said, "O Lord God, Ruler of the universe, since both we that stand before thee are thy people, and they that are besieged in the temple are thy priests, I humbly beseech thee not to hear the prayers of either of them against the other." On the good man's saying this, those who had brought him to the place were so enraged that they immediately fell upon him and stoned him to death.

because the departure of the enemy had left him in a state of security. He therefore collected together his troops, and pursued Hyrcanus and Aretas to a place named Papyron, where, falling on their rear, he put about seven thousand to the sword, among whom was Cephalon, the brother of Antipater.

A short time after this Pompey himself went into Syria, and took up his residence at Damascus, where he received ambassadors from the princes of several nations, soliciting his friendship and protection. Among the rest Hyrcanus and Aristobulus sent their deputies, requesting that he would be pleased to determine the controversy that had so long subsisted between them with respect to the right of sovereignty over the Jewish nation.

When Pompey had heard what the ambassadors had to say in favour of their respective masters, he ordered that the two brothers should appear in person before him, that he might be the better able to enquire into the merits of the cause, and determine it in such a manner as might be most consistent with reason and justice.

In consequence of this the two brothers waited on Pompey to receive his decision; and at the same time great numbers of the chief men of the Jews went to remonstrate against them both. On their arrival at Damascus Pompey thought proper first to hear the sense of the people, who being accordingly admitted to him for that purpose, they pleaded as follows: "That it had been formerly the usage of their nation to be governed by the high-priest of the God whom they worshipped, who, without assuming any other title, administered justice to them, according to the laws and constitutions transmitted down to them from their forefathers. They owned, indeed, that the two contending brothers were of the sacerdotal race, but then they alledged that they had changed the old, and introduced a new form of government, and therefore they prayed that they might not be governed by a king."

Pompey having heard the sense of the people, next gave audience separately to the two contending brothers. The first that appeared was Hyrcanus, who pleaded, "that though he was the elder brother, Aristobulus had usurped his rank and estate, contrary to justice, had robbed him of his birth-right, and reduced him to a dependance on his own bounty. That, as a man born for mischief, he practised piracy at sea, and rapine and depredation at land, upon his neighbours; and that it was the violence of his disposition, which had occasioned the people to be so enraged against him." Having said this he called upon a great number of the principal Jews (who being admitted) confirmed the truth of what he had asserted.

Hyrcanus and his party having withdrawn, Aristobulus was next admitted into the presence of Pompey. The plea he made was, "that Hyrcanus was not superceded in the government through any ambition of his, but by reason of his incapacity to rule; and that his natural sloth and inactivity had brought upon him the contempt of the people. For my

part (said he) I had no other choice than either to assume the government, or suffer it to be transferred into another family; and, with regard to the title of king, I held it only as I received it from my father Alexander." As a testimony of the truth of what he said he produced several young gentlemen of the Jewish nation, who, by the gaudiness of their dress, and the levity of their carriage, did no great credit to the cause which they endeavoured to espouse.

After Pompey had heard both parties, he seemed to be of opinion that Aristobulus had been too hasty in his proceedings; but, for the present, he dismissed them with fair words, and referred the full determination of the matter until he should come to Jerusalem, which he said he would not fail to do as soon as he had finished the war with the Arabians.

Aristobulus, from the manner of Pompey's behaviour, easily perceiving that his inclinations were directed in favour of his brother Hyrcanus, quitted Damascus, without taking leave of Pompey, and immediately returned to Judea, where he took every measure he could project to prepare himself against those consequences, which, from his proceedings, he might reasonably expect would afterwards take place.

The abrupt and disrespectful departure of Aristobulus so highly offended Pompey, that he resolved to take the part of Hyrcanus, without paying any farther attention to their respective complaints. He accordingly marched in pursuit of him with the Roman troops and a considerable body of Syrian auxiliaries. Having passed Pella and Scythopolis, he came at length to Corele, where he learnt that Aristobulus had shut himself up in the castle of Alexandrion, which was a strong fortress built by his father on an high mountain that stood at the entrance of the country of Judea, towards the Samaritan side. Pompey immediately marched his army to the place, and having encamped before it, he sent a messenger to Aristobulus to come down to him. Aristobulus, considering this message as an insult, at first refused to comply; but the people expressing great dissatisfaction at his conduct, and his friends representing the impossibility of withstanding so formidable an enemy as the Romans, he was at length prevailed upon to leave the place, and accordingly went to Pompey, accompanied by several of his principal adherents.

Pompey had been privately informed that Aristobulus had commanded his governors to observe such orders only as were given under his own hand; and therefore, as soon as Aristobulus appeared, he insisted upon his writing to the respective officers in the fortress, authorizing them immediately to surrender the place. Aristobulus judged it necessary to comply with this injunction; but he was so exasperated at the imperious conduct of Pompey, that he immediately departed to Jerusalem, with a full resolution of there opposing him with all his strength.

In order to deprive Aristobulus of the opportunity of making preparations for war, as soon as Pompey knew of his departure, he immediately marched after him, and encamped at Jericho, from whence, the next morning, he proceeded towards

towards Jerusalem. Aristobulus was astonished at the expedition, and alarmed at the appearance of Pompey: he now repented of his conduct, and, to prevent fatal consequences, went to meet him, which he had no sooner done, than he offered him a considerable sum of money, with the command of the city, and whatever else he should request, provided he would but withdraw his forces. These terms were accepted by Pompey, who (retaining Aristobulus) immediately dispatched Gabinus, one of his generals, with some troops, to the city to receive the offered money; but when they came there the persons who commanded in the town, in the name of Aristobulus, refused them admittance, telling them they would not stand to any such agreement.

This was a kind of treatment the Roman general could not digest, and therefore, after ordering Aristobulus to be put in chains, he marched with his army to Jerusalem, and immediately proceeded to reconnoitre the place, in order to form a judgment which was the most likely part to make a successful assault.

No sooner did Pompey appear before Jerusalem, than an insurrection took place between the two parties respectively attached to Aristobulus and Hyrcanus. The adherents of the former were for attempting to rescue their king by force of arms, while the other party were equally strenuous for admitting Pompey into the city; and the majority of the people, conscious of the superior power of the Romans, were friends to the latter measure. The partizans of Aristobulus took possession of the temple, and cut away the bridge of communication between that and the city, being fully resolved to defend themselves to the last extremity. The other party admitted great numbers of the Romans into the town, upon which Pompey dispatched one of his general officers to take possession of the palace. Finding that the Jews who had retired into the temple were absolutely determined not to submit, he gave over all thoughts of a compromise, and made the necessary preparations for an assault, in which he received every possible assistance from Hyrcanus and his adherents.

Pompey resolved to begin the attack on the wall of the north side of the temple, which was surrounded by a very deep and broad ditch. As a necessary preparation he ordered this ditch to be filled up, in doing of which the Jews had the greatest opportunity of annoying the enemy from above. Pompey seeing this ordered his soldiers to employ themselves in the work on the sabbath-day, when the Jews (notwithstanding it had been long deemed lawful for them to use their utmost endeavours for their own security at such times and on such occasions) preserved their superstitious notions to such a degree, that they would not permit the least interruption to take place, or even perform any kind of work, except what

was indispensably necessary for the immediate support or defence of their lives.

The ditch being at length filled up, and the ground levelled, Pompey caused strong towers to be erected thereon; and every necessary preparation being made, the assault was commenced with a species of engines of war that had been brought from Tyre.

The besieged defended themselves with great resolution, but there was no possibility of long withstanding the power of a Roman army. After a siege of three months the temple was taken by assault, and such of the people who attempted to escape, or offered resistance, were instantly put to death. Several priests, who were employed in the duties of their office at the time, paid no regard to their personal safety even when the swords of the enemy were pointed to their breasts, but yielded up their lives while exercising the duties of their profession. The Jews attached to Pompey felt no compassion for those who espoused the cause of Aristobulus; so that a most dreadful carnage took place, in which not less than twelve thousand Jews were put to the sword.

Amidst the general calamity of the Jews on this occasion what most sensibly afflicted them was, the unprecedented event of the Holy of Holies being exposed to profane eyes. To this place only the high-priest was to be admitted; but it was entered by Pompey and his attendants, who saw the candlesticks, lamps, tables for incense, and other articles used in the performance of Divine service. He likewise visited the treasures, where he found two thousand talents of silver, besides vessels of gold and other things of great value. He would not, however, suffer a single article to be touched, but left them entire for the sacred uses to which they were appropriated; and the next day he ordered the temple to be purified, and that the oblations and other ceremonies of religion should be performed as usual.

Pompey, having thus possessed himself of the city and temple of Jerusalem, proceeded to make such regulations as he thought necessary previous to his departure. All those people among the Jews whom he discovered to have been the promoters of the late insurrection, he condemned to the loss of their heads; but such as had signalized themselves in the prosecution of the siege he liberally rewarded. Among these was Hyrcanus, whom he not only restored to the high-priesthood, but likewise made him prince of the country, though he would not permit him to preserve the regal dignity by wearing a crown. He laid the country of Judea under an annual tribute; deprived the Jews of the cities they had gained in Coelo-Syria, and, by annexing them to the jurisdiction of the Roman government, reduced the possessions of the Jews to their former limits. He appointed Scaurus, one of

† Though Pompey was thus modest, yet Crassus (who succeeded Gabinus in the lieutenancy) coming to Jerusalem some time after, not only extorted the two thousand talents, and a large bar of gold by way of bribe, to restrain him from farther plunder; but, contrary to the promise which he

had given upon oath, ransacked the temple all over, and robbed it of every thing he thought worth taking away, in so much that the whole of his sacrilegious plunder amounted to the value of ten thousand talents.

of his generals, to the government of Judea, Coelo-Syria, and all the country of Egypt to the borders of the Euphrates, giving him likewise the command of two legions; that he might be the better enabled to discharge the trust reposed in him.

Having made these regulations, Pompey left Jerusalem, and set forward on his journey home, taking with him Aristobulus, his two sons Alexander and Antigonus, and two of his daughters, as captives, whom he purposed should be led before him when he made his triumphal entry into his capital.—From this period we may justly date the destruction of Jerusalem, and the subjection of the Jewish nation to the Roman yoke, having been compelled to restore to the Syrians what they had taken in the course of a long war, as well as to submit to the loss of the sovereign authority.

While Pompey was on his way to Rome after the reduction of Jerusalem, Alexander (one of the sons of Aristobulus) found means to effect his escape. He continued in obscurity for the space of three years, at the expiration of which he went into Judea, and, having gathered together a great number of forces, possessed himself of several principal places in different parts of the country. Gabinius, the Roman governor in Syria, hearing of the proceedings of Alexander, resolved to march with his army against him, upon which the latter, being informed of his intentions, increased his troops to ten thousand foot and fifteen hundred horse, and strongly fortified Alexandrion, Hyrcanion, and other places near the mountains of Arabia. In the interim Gabinius dispatched one of his principal officers with a body of chosen troops, who were joined by a considerable number of Jews under the command of Malicus, a brave and experienced officer; and soon after Gabinius himself followed with the main body of his army.

As soon as Alexander found Gabinius was proceeding towards him with a force which he well knew he was by no means able to withstand, he thought it most prudent to make a retreat, which he did with all possible expedition. Gabinius, however, closely followed, and overtook him in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, where a battle took place, in which three thousand of Alexander's troops were put to the sword, the like number taken prisoners, and the rest (among whom was Alexander) obliged to save themselves by a precipitate flight.

After this defeat Gabinius went to Jerusalem, and confirmed Hyrcanus in the office of high-priest; but the civil administration he took from the Sanhedrim, and put it into the hands of such magistrates as he thought proper. He likewise divided the land of Judea into five provinces, in each of which he appointed a court of justice, that the people of the different districts might have the convenience of being righted in all matters of a contentious nature.

A short time after this Aristobulus (with his other son Antigonus) escaped from Rome, and going into Judea was joined by a great number of Jews, some of whom were influenced to countenance him merely from a desire of changing their situation, and others from a principal of fidelity and affection. He made an attempt

to repair the fortress of Alexandrion; but on receiving information that Gabinius had dispatched an army in pursuit of him, he retreated to Macherus, where he dismissed the useless part of his followers, retaining only eight thousand men; whom he thought capable of properly bearing arms, and who had resolution enough to stand a contest. In a short time the Roman army arrived; and a general battle took place, in which Aristobulus and his adherents fought with astonishing bravery; but they were at length compelled to yield to the superior power of the enemy, with the loss of five thousand men. Two thousand of the remainder gained a hill, and made some farther resistance, while Aristobulus, with the other thousand, cut a passage through the Roman army, and retired to Macherus. Aristobulus flattered himself that Gabinius would consent to a suspension of hostilities, whereby he might be enabled to reinforce his army, and put the place in a better posture of defence. But he soon found himself mistaken, for the Romans immediately proceeded to assault the place, which was defended with great bravery for two days, when a complete victory was gained over Aristobulus, who, with his son Antigonus, were put in chains, and sent prisoners to Rome. The Senate sentenced the father to perpetual imprisonment; but the son, through the mediation of Gabinius, was set at liberty, and permitted to return to his own country.

Not long after this a difference took place between Cæsar and Pompey, which occasioned a distraction in the Roman affairs, and a general contention among the people throughout the empire. Pompey had left some forces in Syria, to oppose which Cæsar had set Aristobulus at liberty, and proposed to have sent him with two legions into Judea, in order to secure that province: but, before he could get out of Rome, he was poisoned by some of Pompey's party. His body lay there embalmed for a considerable time, till at length it was removed by Mark Antony, who caused it to be carried into Judea, and there honourably interred in the royal sepulchre.

The fate of Alexander, the elder son of Aristobulus, was no less deplorable than that of his father; for Pompey having sentenced him to death for seditious practices against the Romans, sent an order to Scipio to see it immediately put in execution, which was accordingly done at the city of Antioch.

Some time after this Pompey died, which putting an end to the war, Cæsar proceeded on his return home, in the way to which he made a short stay in Syria. While he was here, Antigonus, the second son of Aristobulus, met him, and laid his complaints before him relative to the murder of his father and brother, who he said were cruelly put to death by the contrivance of the friends of the late Pompey. He uttered the most bitter invectives against Hyrcanus and Antipater, whom he represented as the cause of himself and brethren being cruelly driven from their native country; and at the same time charged them with having oppressed the public for the sake of indulging their own private passions and desires. He farther said, that the assistance they had rendered him proceeded rather

from fear than respect, and was only meant to make some compensation for their former attachment to Pompey.

Antipater, one of the parties thus accused by Antigonus, was at this time with Cæsar, and in order to destroy the intended effect of these reproaches, he exposed his wounds, as the best testimony he could give of his loyalty to Cæsar; having done which he spoke as follows: "It is a matter of astonishment (said he) that this man, the son of a declared enemy to the state of Rome, and inheriting the rebellious principles of his father, should have the effrontery thus to accuse the most zealous of Cæsar's subjects, and to arrogate a merit to himself, when his conduct has rendered him deserving of death."

Cæsar, having heard both parties, instead of giving the least countenance to Antigonus, immediately conferred the pontificate upon Hyrcanus; and for that purpose issued the following decree, which he caused to be circulated throughout all Judea, and the neighbouring provinces:

"Julius Cæsar, Emperor, the second time Dictator, and Pontifex Maximus, &c.

"Forasmuch as Hyrcanus, the son of Alexander, a Jew, has, at all times, as well in war as peace, approved himself to be our good and trusty friend and ally, as appeareth by several attestations of unquestionable credit, &c. These services and good offices duly considered, I do hereby confirm and establish,

"to him and his heirs, the perpetual government of the Jews, both as their prince and high-priest, after the manner and method of their own laws; and, from this day forward, enrol them among the number of my trusty and well-beloved friends, and ratify an affinity with them as my associates. I order likewise, that all the legal pontifical rights and privileges be devolved upon him and his sons forever; and that, in case any controversy shall arise among the people concerning the Jewish discipline, himself and his family, in the course of succession, shall be the only persons to determine such disputes."

Cæsar, having thus established Hyrcanus in the high-priesthood and sovereignty, and restored the civil administration to the Sanhedrim, which had been taken from them by Gabinius, was next inclined to bestow some distinguished favour on Antipater. He therefore desired him to mention any commission he wished to enjoy, and it should be readily granted. Antipater submitted the matter entirely to the pleasure of Cæsar, who appointed him procurator, or sub-governor of Judea, under Hyrcanus, and, as a farther instance of his favour, granted him permission to repair the walls of Jerusalem, which had been greatly damaged at the time Pompey laid siege to the place. Antipater made all proper acknowledgments to Cæsar for the distinguished favours he had been pleased to bestow on him; and, after accompanying him to the frontiers of Syria, took his leave, Cæsar returning to Rome and Antipater to Jerusalem.

C H A P. XVII.

Antipater the sub-governor of Judea, repairs the walls of Jerusalem, and exhorts the people to pay a proper submission to Hyrcanus. He promotes his two sons, Phasael and Herod, the first to the government of the country round Jerusalem, and the latter to that of Galilee. Herod makes a prisoner of Hezekias, the ring-leader of an outrageous banditti, whom, with several of his associates, he puts to death. The enemies of Antipater envy the prosperity of his sons, and occasion Herod to be brought before the Sanhedrim to answer for his conduct. He accordingly appears, upon which Hyrcanus, fearful of the consequences, adjourns the court, and advises Herod, in the mean time, to make his escape from Jerusalem. Herod takes this advice, and retires into Syria, where he is countenanced by Sextus Cæsar, who appoints him to the government of Cæle-Syria. Herod resolves to march to Jerusalem, and depose Hyrcanus; but, by the expostulations of his father and brother, he is prevailed on to relinquish his design. A civil war takes place among the Romans, in which Sextus Cæsar is basely murdered by means of Cæcilius Bassus. Julius Cæsar is assassinated in the senate-house at Rome. Antipater is poisoned by Malicus, and his death revenged by his son Herod. Felix declares war against Herod and his brother Phasael, the latter of whom proves victorious, and all the attempts of Felix are rendered abortive. A considerable body of the Jews apply to Mark Antony against Herod and his brother, but without success. Antigonus (the younger son of the late Aristobæus) by the assistance of the Parthians, gains the kingdom of Judea, Hyrcanus and Phasael are taken prisoners and sent to Antigonus, the former of whom has his ears cut off, and the latter puts an end to his own existence. Herod goes to Rome, and, by means of Antony and Augustus, obtains from the Senate a grant of the kingdom of Judea. He is opposed by Antigonus, and indifferently assisted by the Romans. He lays siege to Jerusalem, takes Antigonus prisoner, and prevails with Antony to have him put to death.

ANTIPATER, being appointed to the sub-government of Judea by Julius Cæsar, immediately on his return to Jerusalem set about the duties of his office, by making such

regulations as he thought necessary for the advantage of his master, and the general good of the people. The first thing he did was, to repair the walls both of the city and temple, which

had

had been greatly damaged by Pompey. Having done this, he took an excursion into different parts of the province, in order to establish good order and tranquillity among the people. He told them, that if they observed a due obedience to Hyrcanus they should enjoy plenty and happiness; but, if they sought to gratify their private interests at the expence of the public, he would himself prove a rigid governor, and they would find in the person of Hyrcanus, instead of a gracious and mild prince, a cruel and unrelenting tyrant.

But though Antipater, for political reasons, recommended great deference from the people to Hyrcanus, yet he was conscious of his incapacity to discharge the duties of his office, and was therefore determined to take every necessary precaution against any dangers that might arise in consequence thereof. To this purpose he appointed his eldest son Phasaël, who was a captain of the guards, as superintendant over Jerusalem and the adjoining country, and his younger son Herod he appointed to the government of Galilee.

Herod, though only fifteen years of age, was of a pregnant genius, and enterprising spirit; nor was it long before he discovered himself to be capable of great undertakings. There happened at this time to be a gang of desperate robbers, who infested Galilee, with the neighbouring parts of Cœlo-Syria, committing the most horrid depredations wherever they went. Herod resolved, if possible, to remove so great an evil, and for this purpose marched at the head of a body of men, in pursuit of them. After some days search he came up with them, and a desperate affray took place, in which Herod proved victorious. Hezekias, the ring-leader, with the greater part of his associates, he took prisoners, all of whom, as a terror to those who escaped, and to prevent their committing the like depredations in future, he put to death.

This enterprize procured Herod a very distinguished share of reputation; and the Syrians in general considered him as the man to whom they were indebted for the secure and happy enjoyment of their lives, liberties and possessions. It likewise made him known to Sextus Cæsar, cousin to Cæsar the Great, who at that time held the government of Syria.

While Herod was distinguishing himself as a man of courage, and well adapted for military exploits, his brother Phasaël was equally endeavouring to obtain public favour by the uprightness of his conduct. And so moderate was he in the exercise of that power with which he was invested, and so strictly observant of the principles of justice, that he gained the general approbation and respect of the people.

The reputation gained by Herod and his brother Phasaël contributed not a little to increase that of the father, who experienced as high a degree of veneration as he could have done had he actually been the sovereign of the people; and so far was he from being transported beyond the bounds of moderation by his great success, that he preserved, in the strictest manner, his fidelity and respect towards Hyrcanus.

The wealth, power and grandeur of Antipa-

ter, in which the people held him and his sons, created him many enemies among the leading men of the Jews, more especially when they found he was a favourite with the emperor, as well as with the common people of Rome. They therefore endeavoured to traduce his character, and bring upon him the popular odium; to effect which they insinuated that he had embezzled considerable sums of money which he had received from Hyrcanus for the use of the Romans. But the principal thing which they alleged as the cause of their dissatisfaction was, the violent, daring, and ambitious temper of Herod; insomuch that, in the heat of their indignation, they went in a body to Hyrcanus, whom they haughtily addressed in words to this effect: "Why will you be negligent while every thing is going to destruction? Do you not perceive that Antipater and his sons divide the prerogatives and emoluments of the royal power, while you are a prince only in title and name? Be cautious ere matters proceed too far; for, depend on it, your government and life are equally in danger. If you consider those youths as your deputies, you are mistaken, for, in fact, they are masters." Herod's treatment of Hezekias and his companions was a violation of public justice, it being murder to put a man to death without the ceremony of trial, however atrocious his crimes may have been; but Herod has exercised an arbitrary power without the least pretence of authority for so doing, and therefore ought to be rendered amenable to justice for the iniquities he has committed."

In consequence of these complaints Hyrcanus cited Herod to appear before the council at Jerusalem to answer for his conduct. By the advice of his father, after securing his garrisons in Galilee, he proceeded to obey the sovereign mandate; and, unwilling to offend Hyrcanus, went to Jerusalem, attended only by such a company of soldiers as he thought necessary for the security of his person. Sextus Cæsar, having conceived a great esteem for Herod, was greatly concerned when he heard of his being ordered to appear before the council at Jerusalem, lest, when in the power of his enemies, some fatal event might happen to him. He therefore interposed in his behalf, by immediately dispatching messengers to Hyrcanus, requesting, in the most earnest manner, that he would dismiss the complaint exhibited against him.

When Herod arrived at Jerusalem he immediately made his appearance before the Sanhedrim, at the head of whom sat Hyrcanus. He was dressed in a purple robe, and being surrounded with his guards, he so overawed that great council, that they all sat mute for a considerable time, no person whatever attempting to lay the least accusation against him; till at length one Simeas, who was more courageous than the rest, arising from his seat, addressed the court in words to this effect: "I never (said he) before saw a prisoner at the bar behave in so bold and daring a manner, and I believe your observation and experience will hardly furnish you with such another instance. It has been formerly customary for people in such a situation to appear, by their dress and behaviour, resigned

“ resigned to the legal enquiry that awaits them:
 “ but here is a culprit who seems to pride him-
 “ self in his dress and attendants, which makes
 “ it appear as if public justice was more to be
 “ dreaded by the court than the criminal. Yet
 “ I censure not him for consulting his own safety
 “ rather than the respect due to the laws, so
 “ much as I do the king and the judges, who
 “ have permitted him to act in this manner.
 “ But remember that God is just and powerful;
 “ and the time is advancing when this man,
 “ whom you screen from the justice of the laws,
 “ will be a scourge to you all.”

After Simeas had finished this speech, Hyrcanus, judging from the countenances of the people in general, that Herod was in danger, adjourned the court till the following day, and in the mean time advised him to save himself by a private retreat. Herod took the advice of Hyrcanus, and immediately repaired to his friend Sextus Cæsar, who was then at Damascus, but with a full resolution that if he should be a second time cited to Jerusalem, not to appear on any account whatever.

As soon as the enemies of Herod understood that he had fled from Jerusalem, they used all the means they could to enrage Hyrcanus against him. They told him that he had departed in anger, and that he had certainly resolved on some desperate means of revenge: that there was not the least doubt but that Herod had already concerted his destruction; and though the matter was sufficiently evident, and himself must be convinced of it, yet so pusillanimous was he, that he had not courage to take the necessary means to prevent it.

Hyrcanus was greatly embarrassed in his mind at this representation; but, on receiving information that Sextus had appointed Herod to the command of his troops in Syria, his fears increased to such a degree that he was continually tortured by the imagination that Herod was leading an army to depose him. Nor was he wrong in his conjecture; for Herod, violently enraged at having been treated as a criminal, raised a powerful body of forces, and proceeded towards Jerusalem, with a resolution of depriving Hyrcanus of the government. This enterprise he would certainly have carried into execution had it not been for the interposition of Antipater and his brother Phasaël, who, knowing his intentions, met him on the way, and by their arguments, dissuaded him from so imprudent a proceeding. “ They besought him by no means whatever, to think of offering any violence to the king, to whose favour and countenance he was indebted for the dignified station he enjoyed. They told him that his indignation at being accused should, in a great measure, be appeased by the friendly advice of the king: that if he prided himself in his power, he should consider that the measure he was about to pursue was not only unjust, but likewise unprofitable: that the Divine protection could not be expected by that man who revolted against his legal sovereign: that the prince he meant to oppose was his sincere friend and generous benefactor, and one who had in no instance wronged him, except when irritated by the injurious suggestions of his enemies.” These arguments had the desired ef-

fect: Herod repressed his indignation, waved the design of proceeding to hostilities, and immediately returned with his army to Galilee.

At this time a civil war broke out among the Romans in the neighbourhood of Apamia; during which Cœcilius Bassus caused Sextus Cæsar to be put to death, and afterwards assumed the command of his troops. In revenge for the murder of Sextus, the party attached to Julius Cæsar opposed Bassus with their utmost power; and from a veneration towards the surviving Cæsar, and the memory of the deceased, Antipater dispatched considerable succours to the avengers of the murderers of Sextus, under the command of his two sons Herod and Phasaël.

Julius Cæsar was at this time making preparations for an expedition against the Parthians, but was prevented from executing his design by being barbarously assassinated in the senate-house at Rome. The baseness of this act was considerably heightened by the persons who concerted it, the principal authors being Marcus Brutus, Decimus Brutus, Cassius, Trebonius, and some others on whom Cæsar had conferred the highest favours. The manner in which they executed this horrid deed was as follows: As soon as Cæsar entered the senate-house, Atrilius Cimber, who was one of the conspirators presented himself (as it had been previously agreed among them) before Cæsar, demanding, in a peremptory manner, the pardon of his brother, who had been banished. Cæsar, thinking that such a favour ought rather to be asked with humility than demanded with authority, refused to comply; upon which Atrilius immediately laid hold of the bottom of his robe, and pulled him with such force as to throw him into a reclining posture, when another of the conspirators, named Casca, drawing his dagger, plunged it into Cæsar's shoulder. The wound, however, being slight, Cæsar fell upon the assassin, but, while they were scuffling together, another of the conspirators came behind, and stabbed Cæsar in the side, while Cassius at the same time wounded him in the face, and Brutus pierced his thigh. Cæsar still defended himself for some time, till at length, being greatly weakened with the loss of blood, he went to the foot of Pompey's statue, where he fell, and expired, after having held the government little more than three years.

The death of Julius Cæsar occasioned the most shocking contentions and disorders among the subjects of the Roman empire. The heads of the people were divided into factions, and, regardless of the public welfare, acted according to their respective interests and passions. Cassius (one of the principal conspirators against the life of Julius Cæsar) obtained the command of the army in Syria, which was then before Apamia; and having soon brought over to his interest Marcus and Bassus, with some others, he raised the siege. He then proceeded from one place to another, collecting men, money and arms wherever he went; but the place he most oppressed was Judea, on which he levied a tax of no less than seven hundred talents of silver.

During this confusion Antipater committed the care of gathering part of the money fixed on

on Judea to his two sons; while Malicus (who was the next to him in power and secretly his enemy) was concerned with others in collecting the rest. The first sum, amounting to an hundred talents, was gathered by Herod in Galilee, and his expedition in the business obtained him great favour with Cassius: but the other agents being negligent in their duty so exasperated Cassius that he entirely destroyed several cities under their jurisdiction, and sold the inhabitants for slaves. He was particularly incensed against Malicus, and, for his neglect, formed the design of putting him to death, which he would certainly have done had it not been for Antipater, who pacified him with a present of an hundred talents out of his own coffers.

Malicus repeatedly acknowledged himself indebted to Antipater for the preservation of his life; but no sooner had Cassius left Syria with the treasures he had collected, than Malicus concerted measures for the destruction of his generous benefactor, whom he considered as the only obstacle to his ambitious views.

Antipater, knowing Malicus to be a man of an artful and disingenuous temper, entertained a suspicion of his design. He therefore, as a necessary precaution crossed the river Jordan, and placed himself at the head of as large a body of Jews and Arabians as he could collect together. Malicus, who was bold and artful, finding himself suspected, immediately went to Antipater (whose sons were then with him) and solemnly swore to his innocence. "Can it be imagined (said he) that I should be so weak as to think of a plot or conspiracy, when I knew that Herod had the command of the arms and magazines, and that Phasaël had the command of Jerusalem?" In consequence of this, and other forcible arguments, the two sons of Antipater were induced to think their father had been wrong in his conjectures, and at their instigation Antipater was prevailed on to form a reconciliation with Malicus.

At this time a war commenced between Antony and the younger Cæsar (afterwards called Augustus) on the one part, and Brutus and Cassius on the other. In consequence of this Cassius, being sensible of the distinguished qualities of Herod, nominated him to the government of Cœlo-Syria, and for his security appointed him a strong body guard both of horse and foot; promising, at the same time, that after the war was over, he would promote him to the sovereignty of Judea.

The advancement of Herod proved of fatal consequence to his father; for Malicus, thinking Antipater would become still more powerful on that account, resolved, by some means or other, to have him dispatched, and was continually laying plots for that purpose. At length he hit upon one that succeeded to his wishes; for, taking the opportunity of Antipater's one day dining with Hyrcanus, he bribed the butler to put poison into his wine, of which he instantly expired, and Malicus, with an armed force, (which he had prepared for the purpose) immediately seized on the government of Jerusalem.—Such was the end of Antipater, a man of consummate wisdom, and undaunted resolution, and by whose means Hyrcanus was advanced to the

sovereignty of Judea. He was of the greatest uprightness and probity, a friend to the distressed, and a true lover of his country.

As soon as the death of Antipater was publicly known, the people (who had the greatest veneration for him) suspecting that it was occasioned by Malicus, were exasperated against him to the highest pitch of extravagance, and would certainly have murdered him, had he not, in the most solemn and public manner, declared himself totally innocent of the accusation laid against him. It was very natural for Malicus to apprehend that Phasaël and Herod would seek revenge for the death of their father; and therefore, to avoid the consequences, he assembled together a considerable body of troops, and by that means put himself into a condition of making a proper defence should he be suddenly attacked.

When Herod and his brother heard of the death of their father, they were greatly incensed against Malicus, whom, in their own minds, they were convinced was the author of it. Herod was desirous of wreaking instant vengeance on the abominable traitor; but his brother Phasaël, dissuading him from that measure, from an unwillingness to disturb the public peace, they permitted him to make a defence, and assumed the appearance of being perfectly satisfied of his innocence; after which they proceeded to the interment of their father, the ceremonies of which they caused to be performed with the most distinguished magnificence.

Herod now went to Samaria in order to quell some disturbances which then prevailed in that part of the country. The first solemn day after his arrival at Samaria he went the preceding evening to Jerusalem, attended by his guards, in order to assist in the usual devotions on that occasion. As soon as Malicus heard of his coming, being under great apprehension from Herod, he immediately repaired to Hyrcanus, and prevailed with him to expostulate with Herod on the impropriety of being attended by strangers, by whom the holy religion would be profaned, and the people interrupted in their devotional exercises. Herod treated the matter complained of by Hyrcanus with contempt; and in the night gained admittance, with his attendants, into the city. Malicus did not chuse to make any farther objections to Herod's guards being in the city, or to take any measures that might be likely to produce a disturbance among the people, whom he warmly knew to be attached to Herod. On the contrary, he treated Herod with great apparent respect, and pretended to be exquisitely afflicted at the fate of Antipater. Herod saw through his iniquitous hypocrisy, but, dissembling his rage for the present, appeared to believe him sincere; and the next day, taking his leave, returned with his guards to Samaria.

Herod could now no longer contain his resentment against Malicus, and therefore, while he was at Samaria, he wrote a letter to Cassius, requesting that justice might be done upon the murderer of his father. Cassius, who already entertained an enmity against Malicus, readily consented that Herod should seek revenge, and for that purpose dispatched private orders to th

different commanders of his troops, authorizing them to grant such assistance as he should require.

Malicus, conscious of his guilt, and suspecting that Herod was concerting some plot for his destruction, formed a plan for getting his son from Tyre (where he then resided in quality of an hostage) and retreating with him into Judea, hoping by those means the Jews might revolt, and his strength be thereby greatly increased: but reflecting on the desperate situation of his affairs, and the little probability of succeeding in the attempt, he at length gave it up, and, instead thereof, suggested an enterprize of a much more dangerous nature. He determined to take advantage of Cassius being engaged in the war against Antony, and to spirit up the whole Jewish nation to an insurrection against the Romans; imagining that, if he could but effect his point, he might easily depose Hyrcanus, and, without any difficulty, obtain possession of the government of Judea.

But all the designs of Malicus were frustrated by means of Herod, whose patience being now worn out in not having obtained revenge for the death of his father, concerted a scheme for taking away the life of his treacherous murderer. He invited Hyrcanus and Malicus to an entertainment which he had appointed to be held on a certain day. In the mean time he sent one of his most confident domestics to the officers of the Roman troops, with orders, that they should send a body of men to a certain spot he mentioned, and which the two visitors were obliged to pass, and that as soon as they saw Malicus, they should immediately fall on him and put him to death, but by no means to do the least injury to Hyrcanus. The Roman commanders, in obedience to the directions sent them by Cassius, readily complied with the request of Herod, and sending a body of men at the time and place appointed, as soon as Malicus appeared, they strictly obeyed their orders, by immediately falling on and putting him to death. This alarming and sudden event so affected Hyrcanus, that he fainted away; and remained totally insensible for some time. At length, recovering himself, he enquired by whom Malicus had been slain, and was answered by the Roman commander that he had been put to death by order of Cassius. "Then, said Hyrcanus, I acknowledge Cassius to be the preserver of my life and kingdom, the destruction of both which has been long meditated by the traitor Malicus." Hyrcanus, however, certainly spoke this not as the real sentiments of his mind, but from the impulse of fear, as appears from his conduct after the transaction took place.

No sooner was the death of Malicus, and the manner of it, known in Jerusalem, than a party of his friends rose in arms to revenge it on the sons of Antipater; and having gained Hyrcanus, and Felix the commander of the Roman

forces on their side, put the whole city into confusion. Herod was then at Damascus with Fabius the governor; and an indisposition rendered him incapable of leading his troops to join his brother. Phasaël, however, weathered the storm with great success, for, with his own forces, he drove Felix, and all his tumultuous party, out of Jerusalem; but not being able to pursue them, they soon possessed themselves of several strong places not only in different parts of Judea, but likewise in Galilee.

Phasaël reproached Hyrcanus, in the most spirited terms, for his ingratitude in espousing the cause of Felix, and giving the brother of Malicus possession of Massada, the strongest fort in the country, besides several other castles. He was, indeed, so irritated at the conduct of Hyrcanus, that he would, doubtless, have resented it with some severity, had it not been for a match at this time on foot (and which was soon after consummated) between his brother Herod and Mariamne*, the grand-daughter of Hyrcanus; on which account he suffered his resentment to subside, and all differences were made up between them.

In the mean time Herod, having recovered from his illness, left Damascus, and marching against the enemy soon retook the places they had conquered. He reduced three strong castles that had been taken by Marion, king of the Tyrians (who, by the favour of Cassius, had obtained not only the command of Tyre but all Syria) and drove that monarch out of Galilee. He shewed great lenity to the Tyrians whom he made prisoners, by not only sparing their lives, but likewise complimenting many with presents, by which means he made them friends to his cause.

But Herod had now a more powerful enemy to subdue, for Antigonus, the son of Aristobulus, having entered into a design of opposing him, for that purpose raised a powerful army, and, by a considerable bribe, engaged Fabius, the governor of Damascus, to join him. They accordingly marched to the borders of Judea, where, being met by Herod, a desperate battle ensued, in which the latter proved victorious, the army of Antigonus being totally routed, great numbers slain, and the rest, with their conjunctive leaders, obliged to save themselves by a precipitate flight.

After this conquest Herod returned in triumph to Jerusalem, where he was received with the greatest acclamations of joy. In a few days the marriage was consummated between him and Mariamne, the grand-daughter of Hyrcanus, on which account those persons who had before been his enemies, now became his friends, and used every means in their power to promote his interest.

During these transactions a decisive battle took place near Philippi in Macedonia, between the Roman armies under the command of Brutus and

* She was the daughter of Alexander, the son of king Aristobulus by Alexandra, the daughter of Hyrcanus II. She was a lady of extraordinary beauty and distinguished virtue, and, in all other laudable qualifications, accomplished beyond most women of her time: but the real motive for Herod's

desiring to make her his wife was, because the Jews, at that time had a very zealous regard for the Asmonean family (that is, the descendants of the Maccabees) and therefore he thought that by marrying this lady, he should the more easily obtain the general affections of the people.

and Cassius on the one part; and Mark Antony and Cæsar Octavianus on the other, in which the latter proved victorious. The two armies consisted of near 100,000 men each, and the contest lasted for some days. Brutus and Cassius both commanded in the action; but Cæsar Octavianus being sick in his tent, the command of the other army fell wholly upon Antony. The forces commanded by Cassius were soon repulsed so that he retired to an hill, in order to wait for an account of that part of the army which was commanded by Brutus; but in the confusion and dust, not being able to perceive what was doing, his mind misgave him that Brutus was overcome, and thereupon he commanded his servant Pindarus to cut off his head. Brutus, on the first day of action, was so successful, that he made the enemy retire, and took Octavianus's camp; but, in a few days after, coming to a second general engagement, he was entirely routed, and being unwilling to fall into the hands of the enemy; he prevailed with his friend Strabo to dispatch him; which put a final close to the contest.

The two conquerors having thus subdued their enemies, separated their armies, Antony going with his forces into Asia, and Cæsar Octavianus retiring to Italy.

When Antony arrived at Bithynia he was waited on by ambassadors from most princes and states in that part of the world to congratulate him on his late success, who sent considerable presents to him in order to secure his future friendship. The factious Jews took this opportunity of endeavouring to raise fresh disturbances. They sent several principal people of the Jewish nation to Antony, exhibiting violent complaints against Phasael and Herod, whom they accused of having usurped, and arbitrarily exercised, the sovereign authority of Judea, leaving Hyrcanus only the name of king. But Herod, by his artful management, defeated all their designs, for knowing on what business they were gone, he dispatched messengers to Antony with a considerable sum of money as a present, which had so powerful an effect, that Antony would not pay any regard to the complaints laid against him.

When Antony arrived at Ephesus, Hyrcanus, and such of the principal Jews who were in his interest, sent ambassadors to him with a crown of gold, and various other presents, at the same time requesting that their countrymen, who were carried away prisoners by Cassius, contrary to the rules of war, might be set at liberty, and restored to those possessions of which they had been unjustly deprived.

Antony, being pleased with the compliment paid him, and thinking the request made by the Jews strictly just and reasonable, readily complied; and in consequence thereof wrote to Hyrcanus as follows:

" Marcus Antonius, Emperor, to Hyrcanus the High priest and Prince of the Jews, greeting.

" Forasmuch as we have been assured of the regard that you and your people entertain for us (agreeable to what we have formerly experienced) by your ambassadors at Ephesus, who have honourably discharged their commission; and forasmuch as we are convinced of your

" sincerity; piety and virtue, by better proofs than verbal professions; we accept your friendship; and readily agree to your proposals. We will take care that you and your people participate in the same enjoyments with us; and for this purpose have already sent orders that the Jews, who have been made slaves by Cassius, or his order, be immediately set at liberty. And we farther command that all the privileges granted by us be peaceably enjoyed by you and your heirs, forbidding the Tyrians from molesting you, directing that they restore all the goods and estates of which the Jews have been deprived; and declaring our acceptance of the crown and presents you have been pleased to transmit to us by the hands of your ambassadors."

At the same time that Antony sent this letter to Hyrcanus, he dispatched messengers to the heads of the Tyrians, with an edict to the following effect:

" The Emperor Marcus Antonius to the senate, magistrates and people of Tyre, greeting.

" Whereas the ambassadors of Hyrcanus, high-priest and prince of the Jews, have signified to us at Ephesus, that when our enemies had usurped possession of this province, you seized the lands of many of those people to our use: now know ye, that as we embarked in the late war for the public welfare, and promotion of religion, against the rebels, we hereby command that you not only live in friendship with our allies the Jews, but return to the proprietors whatever was seized by the enemies, to whom the senate not having given right of possession, they could not transfer any right to others, as what they possessed was in consequence of unlawful seizure. Having now subdued our adversaries, we judge it expedient to re-establish our friends in the possession of their estates and properties: wherefore, if you at present possess any lands or estates, heretofore the property of Hyrcanus prince of the Jews, which were seized during the invasion of Cassius, we command that they be immediately delivered to the persons who originally owned them; and if any doubts or difficulties arise, we will enquire into them when we come into your country, and see that justice is equally administered."

Notwithstanding the great protection Hyrcanus, and consequently Phasael and Herod, together with all those Jews who were in their interest, obtained from these decrees of Antony, and notwithstanding the rebuff that their enemies had met with in their application to Antony at Bithynia, yet they were still resolved to make another attempt for obtaining their ends. Accordingly, Antony going to Daphne, near Antioch, no less than one hundred of the most considerable people among the factious Jews repaired to him in a body, in order to repeat the charges which had been before exhibited against Phasael and Herod; and the most eloquent speakers were appointed to urge their complaints. Antony now thought proper to give them a hearing; and the defence was undertaken by Massala and Hyrcanus, the latter being induced to plead on account

of his relationship to the parties accused. Antony, having heard both parties, demanded of Hyrcanus whom he considered as the most perfectly qualified for public administration. To which he replied, that he knew no persons so capable of the government as Phasaël and Herod. This declaration was highly satisfactory to Antony, who still held in grateful recollection the friendly reception and liberal entertainment he had received from their father Antipater at the time Gabinius invaded Judea. He therefore, by way of acknowledgment for past favours received from Antipater, made his two sons Herod and Phasaël tetrarchs †, and committed all the affairs of Judea to their administration. This he confirmed by letters to the Jews; and, to oblige them to obey what he had done, he detained fifteen out of the hundred as hostages, whom he would have put to death had it not been for the intercession of Herod.

The benevolence of Herod, however, had little weight with his enemies, who were no sooner dismissed than they concerted new schemes to destroy him. When Antony arrived at Tyre they dispatched no less than a thousand of their principal men to him with accusations of the like nature as before against Herod and Phasaël. These people were so outrageous that Antony commanded the magistrates of the city to disperse them, and in every respect to maintain the authority of the tetrarchs he had established. Herod and Hyrcanus, who had likewise gone to Tyre on this occasion, went to the deputies, and in a friendly manner expostulated with them on the dangerous tendency of their conduct, and exhorted them to moderation, lest the ruin of themselves and their whole nation should be the consequences. But these remonstrances only tended to increase their insolence and resentment, and Antony, finding himself under the necessity of reducing them by force of arms, some were killed, and many wounded. Hyrcanus caused the slain to be decently interred, and ordered all necessary care to be taken of such as were wounded. But this beneficence had no effect upon those who escaped: they continued their outrageous proceedings, and committed various acts of violence, at which Antony was so irritated that he ordered the fifteen hostages, who had been left with him at Daphne, to be put to death, and threatened a severe revenge against the rest unless they instantly dispersed. This had the desired effect, the remaining deputies immediately leaving Tyre, and returning to Jerusalem.

Not long after this Herod and his brother found they had enemies to contend with who were much more powerful than those with whom they had hitherto been engaged. Antigonus, the

son of Aristobulus, after being defeated by Herod on the borders of Judea, retired to Parthia, where he was kindly received and protected by the prince of that country. After he had been some time here, and established an interest among the most considerable persons of that nation, he engaged to pay them a thousand talents, and present them with five hundred of the finest women in the country, if they would assist him in the recovery of his father's kingdom.

The Parthians readily accepted the proposal of Antigonus, and the king sent his general with him, at the head of a very powerful army, to invade Judea. As soon as they entered the country great numbers of the Jews joined them in their march, and when they came to Jerusalem the faction that hated the two brothers immediately declared for Antigonus. Herod and Phasaël, together with Hyrcanus, having planted themselves, with their respective forces, in different parts of the city, held out for some time with great resolution, till at length, Hyrcanus and Phasaël being taken prisoners by the Parthians; and Herod, on that account, not being able to defend the city alone, made his escape by night. He took with him his mother Cypros and his sister Salome, Mariamne his wife, and Alexandra his mother-in-law, together with a great number of his principal friends; and with them he made the best of his way to Massada, a prodigious strong fortress, built on the top of a very high mountain near the west side of the lake Asphaltites.

As soon as the Parthians understood that Herod had fled from the city, they immediately marched into it, and plundered the houses of the principal people who had left them for the safety of their persons. They made booty of all the property they could find, and even seized the treasure of the royal palace: but the spoil was not so considerable as they expected, for Herod, being sensible of their rapacious disposition, had the precaution to remove his most valuable treasure, and his example was followed by all those who attended him to Massada.

Having plundered Jerusalem and the adjacent country, the Parthians declared Antigonus king of Judea, and then delivered to him Hyrcanus and Phasaël in chains. Phasaël, knowing that his death was determined, put a voluntary end to his life and sufferings; and not having the liberty of his hands to dispatch himself, such was his resolution, that he beat out his brains against the walls of the prison ‡. As for Hyrcanus, Antigonus ordered that both his ears should be cut off, in order that he might be incapacitated from ever after becoming high-priest, no blemished, or maimed person, being deemed eligible

to

† The word *tetrarch*, which sometimes occurs in Scripture (as in Matt. xiv. 1. Luke iii. 1, 19. ix. 7. Acts xiii. 1.) and is frequently used among the descendants of Herod the Great, signifies a Lord that has the fourth part of a state, province or kingdom, without wearing a diadem, or bearing the title of a king. But it must not be always understood in a rigorous sense, because the name of *tetrarch* was given to him who possessed sometimes an *half*, and sometimes a *third* part, of any principality; nay, frequently the name of *king* was given to him who was but a *tetrarch*, and that of a

kingdom, to a *tetrarchy*.

‡ Josephus tells us a report was circulated that Phasaël had repented of having offered violence to himself, and that Antigonus sent a physician to him, who administered poison to his wound, and by these means put an end to his existence. He farther says, that Phasaël, previous to his decease, being informed by a woman that his brother had escaped, declared he should die happy, since he should leave a friend who would revenge his injuries.

to the pontifical dignity.—See Levit. xxi. 18.

After the Parthians had placed Antigonus on the throne of Judea, they laid claim to the offers he had first made them for their assistance, namely, the thousand talents, and the five hundred fine women. The former of these Antigonus readily paid, but the latter he could not comply with, Herod having seized most of the fine women, and sent them away with his wife and family, to Massada. This defeat occasioned some disturbances, but at length the matter was settled to the satisfaction of both parties, and the greater body of the Parthians departed, taking with them Hyrcanus as their prisoner.

In the mean time Herod, so far from sinking under his misfortunes, seemed but the better disposed to encounter them. Having furnished the fortress of Massada with provisions for several months, he then left his mother, and the other women of quality whom he had taken with him from Jerusalem, under the care of a younger brother named Joseph, and proceeded to Petra in Arabia, in hopes of procuring some assistance from Malchus, who had succeeded Aretas as king of that country.

At this time Herod was unacquainted with the death of his brother, and his principal view in going to the king of Arabia was, to obtain from him a sum of money for his ransom. He rested his expectations of success on the antient friendship that had subsisted between the Arabians and his father Antipater, and proposed to resign the son of Phasaël, who was then only seven years of age, as a security for the return of the money. But all his expectations proved abortive, for before he reached Petra he received a message from Malchus, desiring him immediately to depart his dominions, he being afraid that, should he receive him, it would give offence to his neighbours the Parthians.

Herod, having received this unworthy treatment from Malchus, after sending messengers to him with a severe reply, proceeded in his way to Egypt. In the evening of the first day he met with a number of people, who had taken shelter in a castle in his way, and were friends to his interest; and the following day he arrived at Rinocorura, where he received the first information of the ill treatment of Hyrcanus, and the death of his brother Phasaël.

In the mean time Malchus, being touched with remorse at his ill-treatment of Herod, dispatched messengers after him soliciting his return; but as he had by this time reached Pelusium, Malchus was sensible of his ingratitude too late to repair the injury.

The inhabitants of Pelusium refused Herod the liberty of embarking from that place, in consequence of which he applied to the magistrates of the town, who granting him permission to take what course he pleased, he set sail for Alexandria. Cleopatra, who was at this time there, and preparing for an important enterprize, gave him an honourable and magnificent reception, with a view of inducing him to accept of a military command in her service. But Herod was so desirous of proceeding to Rome, that the earnest entreaties of the queen, the extremity of the season, and the danger of the

seas, were not sufficient to make him change his purpose. He accordingly left Alexandria, and, after a voyage of no small danger and difficulty, at length landed at Rhodes, where he found public affairs in a very embarrassed state. He was received here in a very generous and hospitable manner by two friends, named Saphinias and Ptolemy; and though he was greatly distressed for want of money, yet he procured a vessel to convey him to Brundisium, from whence he repaired, with all possible expedition, to Rome.

As soon as Herod arrived at Rome, he went immediately to Antony, whom he made acquainted with the miserable state of his affairs in Judea, and at the same time earnestly intreated he would give him some assistance, that he might recover that right which himself had bestowed on him, and of which he had been unjustly and cruelly deprived by his enemies.

Antony, recollecting the former friendship that had subsisted, first with his father Antipater, and afterwards with him; and at the same time being exasperated against Antigonus, whom he always considered as an enemy to the Romans, not only warmly espoused his cause himself, but engaged likewise Octavianus (who was afterwards called Augustus) so closely in his interest, that, by the help and influence of these two men, the Senate unanimously decreed that Herod should be king of Judea, and that Antigonus should be declared an enemy to the commonwealth.

Herod having, in the short space of seven days, dispatched his affairs thus prosperously, left Rome, and landing at Ptolemais, began to raise forces with a design to march against Antigonus, who, almost ever since his departure, had been besieging the fortress of Massada. With these, and such Roman auxiliaries as he received from Ventidius, Antony's general, and Silo, his lieutenant in Palestine, he soon made himself master of the greatest part of the country, took Joppa, relieved Massada, and, taking the castle of Ressa in his way, marched directly to Jerusalem, and encamped his forces on the west side of the city.

Antigonus had provided a place with all kinds of warlike ammunition, and had likewise got a good garrison, who, with darts and stones from the walls, together with flying parties frequently making excursions, greatly annoyed Herod's army. Herod, in hopes of making easy work of it, caused an herald to make proclamation round the walls of the city, setting forth that he had no other view in the present expedition, but the security of the city, and the general welfare of the people, at the same time promising an act of indemnity to all who would quietly submit. Antigonus, on the contrary, directing himself to Silo, and the Romans, complained of the injustice they did him, in transferring the sovereignty of Judea from him, who was of royal descent, to a Plebeian, and half a Jew, as Herod was; and from these, and such like reproaches on both sides, they came at length to acts of open hostility, in which Antigonus and his men behaved so valiantly, that they soon drove the assailants from the walls, and they were obliged to retreat some distance from Jerusalem.

Ventidius, indeed, had left his lieutenant Silo

in Judea, to assist Herod in the reduction of Jerusalem; but in his manner of managing the war (which was to get sums from Herod to promote his interest, and greater from Antigonus to hinder it) he did more harm than good. He not only took all the measures he could project to drain the coffers of Herod, but likewise encouraged his soldiers to mutiny, on pretence of the want of forage and provisions, more commodious quarters, and better pay. These seeming inconveniences and obstacles gave great uneasiness to Herod, who thought it prudent to apply not only to Silo's officers, but likewise the common soldiers, being fearful lest a general revolt should take place, and his expedition, instead of being attended with success, should prove destructive to him and his adherents. He accordingly represented to them that he had received his commission from Cæsar, Antony and the senate, and requested that they would wait with patience one day, and all their demands should be satisfied. He then gave orders for supplies of provisions, which were immediately sent to the people in great abundance; and in order to guard against a scarcity in future, he wrote for cattle, corn, oil, wine, and other necessaries to be sent from Samaria, which was then under his protection. But notwithstanding all this he found some inconveniences from the treachery of Silo, who giving notice to Antigonus of all that passed, he, with flying parties and ambuscades, frequently intercepted, and cut off the convoys that were designed for the united army.

Herod, unwilling to remain inactive, and finding it impossible, at least at present, to possess himself of Jerusalem, left the main army, and, with five companies of Romans, five of Jews, and a small party of horse, proceeded towards Jericho. On his arrival there he found the city entirely abandoned, and that five hundred of the inhabitants, with their wives and families, had sought refuge among the mountains. After stationing a garrison in the town, he marched with his forces into Galilee, and recovered all those places which had been taken by Antigonus. He then employed himself for some time in rid-

ding that part of the country of those gangs of thieves* and banditti with which it had been long infested, to the great satisfaction and tranquillity of the inhabitants.

When Herod returned to the main part of his army he renewed the siege of Jerusalem, but perceiving the Roman generals were very cool in his interest, he resolved to go again to Antony (who was then besieging Samosata, a city upon the Euphrates) in order to make a representation of their behaviour. During his absence he left his brother Joseph to command in Judea, giving him strict orders not to put any thing to the hazard, or engage in any enterprize, till he should return. But Joseph, disregarding his brother's orders, marched his own troops, with five companies of horse, towards Jericho, where a party of Antigonus forces were encamped. This proved fatal to Joseph, who being surrounded by the enemy, he was slain himself, and most of his forces cut to pieces; which gave those who were disaffected to Herod, both in Galilee and Idumea, an opportunity of revolting.

In the mean time Herod was making the best of his way to Antony, who no sooner heard of his approach than he drew out his army to receive him, and, during his stay, shewed him all the marks of friendship and esteem. He would willingly have assisted him in person, had he not at this time made an engagement to pay a visit to Cleopatra†, queen of Egypt. He left his army with his principal commander Socius, whom he ordered to assist Herod on all occasions against his enemies. Having done this Antony took his leave of Herod, and departed to Egypt; after which Socius, in obedience to his master's orders, gave Herod two legions for the guard of his person, with which he marched before, and Socius soon followed with the rest of his forces.

When Herod arrived at Daphne he received an account of his brother Joseph's defeat and death, upon which he resolved, if possible, to seek revenge on the enemy. For this purpose he hastened, with all expedition, to Mount Libanus, where he raised eight hundred of the natives, and with these, and the Roman forces, he marched towards

* These thieves had so sheltered themselves in the caves and holes of the mountains, that it was no easy matter to come at them, because the steepness and cragginess of the mountains made it almost impossible, either to scale them from below, or from above to get down to them by any passage; and therefore (to ferret them out of their dens) Herod bethought himself of the following expedient. He caused several large cases, or chests of wood, to be made, and, filling them with soldiers, let them down into the entrances of the caves by chains from engines he had fixed above; by which means he either destroyed all that lurked in them, or else reduced them to terms of submission.

Josephus tells us, that Herod, being desirous that some of the robbers should be saved, ordered a herald to make proclamation that the lives of those who surrendered should be preserved; but that they all rejected the offer, and that even those who were made prisoners, preferring death to the loss of liberty, put an end to their lives. He farther says, that the wife and seven sons of an aged man having entreated his permission to surrender themselves to the enemy, the old man complied, and that as they approached him, one by one, at the entrance of the cave, he put them all to death. That Herod beheld this shocking scene, and being greatly affected, he endeavoured by signs and entreaties to divert the man from his purpose, but without effect: and

that after he had slain his wife and sons, he first upbraided Herod, and then, in his presence, put a period to his own existence.

† Antony had been for some time enamoured with Cleopatra, who, by the charms of her beauty and wit, had drawn him into those snares, which held him enslaved to her as long as he lived, and, in the end, caused his ruin. She was a woman of great parts, and spoke several languages very fluently. She was, however, a person greatly addicted to all kinds of vices, and of such insatiable avarice and ambition, that she would do any thing, however base and perfidious, that was likely to promote her interest. Her brother, a youth about fifteen years of age, she caused to be dispatched, and prevailed with Antony to have her sister Artinocut off at Ephesus, even in the temple of Diana. Antony, indeed, was a man of a very agreeable temper, had a generous disposition, was an eloquent speaker, and a complete master in all military abilities. But he was a great libertine in his way, and so eager in the pursuit of his unlawful pleasures, that he stuck at nothing to obtain them, by which means he brought himself so absolutely under the command of this wicked and voluptuous woman, that (as Josephus expresses it) *she seems not only to have captivated, but bewitched him.*

towards Galilee, where the enemy, during his absence, had committed the most violent depredations. As soon as he came up with them, a battle ensued, in which Herod proved victorious, the enemy being entirely routed, and obliged to save themselves by flying to a strong castle which they had left the preceding day. This fortress Herod laid siege to, and the enemy defended themselves with great bravery for some time, till at length Herod's forces being joined by another company sent from Socius, the garrison were thrown into the utmost consternation, and not chusing to make any farther resistance, made their escape by the favour of the night.

Herod, impatient to revenge the death of his brother Joseph, now hastened, with all expedition, towards Jericho, in his way to which he met with a very unexpected accident. A party of six thousand of the enemy came suddenly down from the mountains, and resolutely falling on Herod's forces, the Romans were thrown into such a consternation that they immediately retreated: the enemy seeing this immediately pursued them, and a warm engagement took place, but no material victory was obtained on either side, only that Herod, during the action, received a slight wound by a random dart from the enemy.

A few days after this Antigonus, hearing that Herod was hastily marching to Jerusalem, dispatched Pappus his general, with the main strength of his forces to meet him and give him battle. The two armies accordingly met, when a desperate encounter ensued, in which Pappus's forces were entirely routed, himself, among many others, slain, and the rest obliged to seek their safety by a precipitate flight. The next day Herod caused the head of Pappus, by whom Joseph had been slain, to be cut off and sent to Pheroras, with a view of affording him some degree of consolation for the common loss they had sustained in the death of their brother Joseph.

Herod was so elated with this success, that he would have immediately led his victorious troops to Jerusalem, had not that expedition been rendered impracticable by the severity of the winter season; which was the only obstacle to his then obtaining a compleat conquest over his enemies, and effectually ruining Antigonus, who was at that time (as afterwards appeared) actually making preparations for abandoning the city and kingdom.

On the opening of the next spring Herod marched with all his forces against Jerusalem, with a full resolution of either subduing it, or perishing in the attempt. His own army consisted of about 30,000 men, to which Socius brought eleven legions † of foot, and six thousand horse, besides the auxiliary troops of Syria. On his arrival before the city he resolved to assault it in that quarter where Ptolemy, king of Egypt, had formerly made a successful attempt. He therefore assigned the officers their respective stations and duties, nominated a certain number of men to posts in the suburbs, or-

dered three ramparts to be raised before the walls, and strong towers to be erected thereon. Having made these preparations, and given the necessary commissions to persons, in whose diligence, courage and fidelity he knew he could confide, he began the assault on the northern quarter of the city next the temple. Herod founded his right of making the attempt to divest Antigonus of the city of Jerusalem, and sovereignty of Judea, on the decree of the Roman Senate, by which he had been constituted king; and Socius urged that he was authorized, by the commission of Antony, to support Herod in the war.

Herod and Socius began the assault with such violence that the utmost consternation prevailed among the Jews throughout the city: great numbers of them assembled about the temple, lamenting their unhappy fate, while those who possessed more courage, paraded the town and places adjacent, seizing all the articles that were proper for the support of the soldiers, who were busily employed in counteracting the operations of the assailants.

During the siege the Jews surmounted every danger with the greatest alacrity, and, fearless of death, sustained a most resolute opposition; but it must be acknowledged that they were greatly surpassed by the Romans in point of military skill and address. By mining, in which they greatly excelled, and by surprises, they frequently distressed the enemy where it was least expected: when their fortifications had received any injury they made the necessary reparations with surprizing diligence; and, in short, with undaunted resolution they opposed fatigues, danger and difficulty, firmly persisting in their resolution of defending themselves to the last extremity.

After Herod's numerous army had continued the siege for nine months, a breach was made in the walls and a select party of his most resolute troops, seconded by some of Socius's centurions, effected an entrance into the city. They immediately surrounded the temple, and in the mean time the rest of the army arriving, a general massacre ensued: no respect was paid either to sex or age, nor were even the lives of those spared who sought refuge in the temple. Herod enjoined his people, on their allegiance, to withhold their rage; but they were so irritated by the hardships they had sustained during the siege, that, abandoning every sentiment of humanity, they still continued the slaughter; and death triumphed in the most horrid forms.

The conduct of Antigonus was unworthy his exalted station. As soon as he saw that all was lost, he descended from the tower called Baris, and meanly threw himself at the feet of Socius, imploring mercy. Socius, considering his conduct as the highest act of meanness, and displaying a total want of courage, first treated him with contempt, and then put him in chains as his prisoner.

Though Herod had gained a compleat victory
over

† It is generally thought that a legion was composed of ten cohorts; a cohort of fifty maniples; a manipule of fifty men, and, consequently, that a legion was a body of six

thousand soldiers; but others are of opinion, that a legion was an uncertain number, and contained sometimes *four*, sometimes *five*, and sometimes *six* thousand men.

over his enemies, yet he had still some more difficulties to encounter. The foreign auxiliaries, from a curiosity to see the things dedicated to God, violently crowded into the temple; upon which Herod remonstrated with them on the impropriety of their conduct, and besought them to desist from entering so sacred a place. But neither entreaties nor menaces had the least effect, upon which Herod was under the necessity of using force to repress their insolence, deeming it necessary, in this particular, to disappoint their designs, since if conquest was to prove the cause of the sacred privacies being exposed to common view, it would be a more unhappy event than if he had been defeated.

Herod being desirous that the city should not be plundered, informed Socius that, if the treasure was seized and the town depopulated, he should be sovereign of a desert; and that he would not purchase the government of the universe at the expence of sacrificing the lives of his subjects. Socius told him, that after what the troops had undergone they would naturally expect some part of the pillage. Herod admitted the force of Socius's plea, and declared that every man should be duly recompenced out of his own private coffers. According to his promise Herod rewarded the private soldiers, and

the officers, in proportion to their respective stations and deserts, and presented Socius with gifts worthy the regal character: in short, the liberality and munificence he displayed on this occasion afforded universal satisfaction.

Socius, after making a handsome present for the service of the temple, departed from Jerusalem, taking with him the pusillanimous Antigonus, as his prisoner, to Antony, and leaving the courageous Herod in full possession of the sovereignty of Judea.

Antony had no design of taking away the life of Antigonus, but Herod not thinking himself safe in his kingdom so long as this remainder of the royal family continued alive, so repeatedly solicited Antony to put him to death, that he at length complied with his request, and sentenced Antigonus to the loss of his head.

With this prince ended the reign of the famous and illustrious house of the Asmonæans (illustrious in itself for the long continuance of the regal and sacerdotal succession in it, and no less famous for the many signal services which they and their ancestors had, from time to time, done the public) after it had subsisted from the beginning of Judas Maccabeus to the death of Antigonus, which was a space of one hundred and twenty-eight years.

C H A P. XVIII.

Herod, after getting possession of Jerusalem, and the sovereignty of Judea, revenges himself on his enemies. He promotes a person of mean birth to the pontificate, but afterwards deposes him at the instigation of his relations, and places Aristobulus in his stead. Hyrcanus is treated with great respect by the king of Parthia, who gives him his liberty, and he returns to Jerusalem. Herod confines Alexandra, the daughter of Hyrcanus, causes Aristobulus, the high-priest, to be drowned, and puts to death his uncle Joseph. He marches with an army to assist Antony against Cæsar Octavianus, but, by Antony's orders, he makes war with the Arabians. A dreadful earthquake happens in Judea. The Arabians take advantage of this, and after murdering the Jewish ambassadors, march with great resolution against Herod. A battle ensues, in which Herod proves victorious, and the Arabians are totally reduced. Antony is defeated and killed at the battle of Actium. Herod, fearful that Hyrcanus should supplant him in the sovereignty, causes him to be put to death. He submissively applies to Cæsar, who now assumes the surname of Augustus. He meets with a favourable reception, and is confirmed in the government of Judea. He is greatly perplexed by domestic troubles on his return to Jerusalem. He goes a second time to Cæsar, and on his return puts to death his wife Mariamne. He repents of his conduct, and, from the horrors of his mind, is seized with a dangerous disease. On his recovery he rebuilds the temple of Jerusalem, which is the last memorable occurrence previous to the incarnation of Our Blessed Saviour, the Prince of Peace, and Redeemer of Mankind.

THE conquest of Jerusalem having established Herod in the sovereignty of Judea, he began his reign by revenging himself on all those whom he knew to have been his enemies. Among these were the members of the Sanhedrim, all of whom he caused to be put to death, except two, the one named Pollio, and the other Sameas. These two, during the whole course of the siege, were for delivering up the city to Herod, while the rest strongly opposed

the motion, and did all in their power to excite the people to that fierce and obstinate resistance, which made the siege of such long duration.

The unfortunate Hyrcanus was at this time a prisoner in Parthia; and as the people wanted an high-priest, Herod thought it most adviseable to chuse a man of obscurity to that office, who, having no credit or interest at Jerusalem, might not be capable (notwithstanding his high station and dignity) to interfere with the royal authority.

city. He therefore sent for one Ananel from Babylon (who was, indeed, of the pontifical family, but of no farther merit than having an acquaintance with Herod) and him he immediately constituted high-priest of Jerusalem.

The promotion of this mean person greatly disgusted Alexandra, the daughter of Hyrcanus, and mother of Aristobulus, (brother to Mariamne the wife of Herod) to whom, by right of birth, the office of high-priest belonged. She therefore, in order to resent the contempt offered her family, in setting aside her son, and obtruding a foreigner into the pontificate, wrote to Cleopatra, queen of Egypt (who had an absolute ascendancy over Antony) to bestow that honour upon her son. Her application succeeded to her utmost wishes. Herod, having heard of the steps she had taken, at first affected resentment, but being persuaded of the great influence the Egyptian queen had over Antony, he soon formed a reconciliation with Alexandra, deposed Ananel, and made Aristobulus (who was then only seventeen years of age) high-priest in his stead.

During these transactions the old king of Parthia died, and was succeeded in the government by his son Phraortes. This prince no sooner heard of Hyrcanus's character and quality, than he treated him with the greatest respect, and, by his conduct, evinced how much he wished to prove himself his friend and protector. He ordered him to be released from his chains, and allowed him the whole city of Babylon (which was then a part of the Parthian empire) as the bounds of his confinement. There were at this time in Babylon great numbers of Jews, all of whom were greatly pleased at the indulgence given to Hyrcanus, and testified their satisfaction by paying him that reverence which was due to him both as an high-priest and a monarch.

But notwithstanding the situation of Hyrcanus was thus rendered agreeable through the benevolence of the Parthian king, yet he was dissatisfied in his mind, and discovered a fond desire to his native country, vainly imagining that former services (he having been the preserver of Herod's life when he was arraigned before the Sanhedrim, and indeed the founder of his fortunes) would secure him the favour of the king. On the other hand Herod, having heard of the indulgence given to Hyrcanus, and his desire to return to Jerusalem, was as anxious to get him into his power as he was willing to come. He therefore not only invited him with great earnestness, and still greater promises, but sent an embassy to Phraortes to solicit his return. Phraortes readily complied with the inclinations of the one, and the request of the other; upon which Hyrcanus left Babylon and returned to Jerusalem, where, for some time, he was treated by Herod with all the outward tokens of kindness and respect due to his character.

Though Herod had formed a seeming reconciliation with Alexandra the daughter of Hyrcanus, yet he detested her in his heart, and as she had, by the interest of Cleopatra, got her son into the high-priesthood, he was fearful that she might, by the same means, procure her father the sovereignty. In consequence of these fears, he took an opportunity of quarrelling with her,

forbade her to concern herself with any affairs of a public nature, confined her to the court, and set spies to watch even her domestic œconomy.

This base treatment so exasperated Alexandra, that she again applied to Cleopatra, and having received an invitation from that princess, she made the necessary preparations for departing to Egypt; intending to take with her Aristobulus her son. To conceal her design from Herod she had procured two biers, in which the servants were to carry them to the sea side, where a vessel lay in readiness to convey them to Egypt. But this stratagem miscarried owing to the treachery of one of the servants, who communicated the whole scheme to a man named Sabbion. This person had been suspected of assisting in the death of Antipater, the father of Herod, and therefore, in order to obviate the consequences that might follow, he divulged the whole secret to Herod. The king suffered them to go some way from the city, and then surprized and brought them back: but, fearing the power and influence of Cleopatra, he suspended his resentment, and, making a virtue of necessity, pretended, with great clemency, to pardon in both what he dared not punish in either. But it was not long before he embraced the opportunity of taking a fatal revenge on the young Aristobulus.

The Feast of Tabernacles was now approaching, and Aristobulus was to officiate as high-priest. He was very beautiful in person, tall, well shaped, and in the eighteenth year of his age. During the time of his officiating he discharged himself with so becoming a reverence, and the splendor of the pontifical robes added such a lustre to the gracefulness of his person, that by both these he captivated the affections of the people, who could not help expressing their approbation of him in terms of the most respectful nature. This raised Herod's jealousy to such a degree, that he immediately meditated a scheme for taking away the life of Aristobulus, which he effected as follows.

As soon as the Feast of Tabernacles was over, Herod invited Aristobulus to an entertainment at Jericho, and when, after dinner, several of his attendants bathed themselves in a fish-pond, Aristobulus was prevailed upon to bear them company; but no sooner was he plunged into the water than those who were in it before (according as they were directed by Herod) ducked and dipped him (by way of sport and play as they pretended) so long under water, that he was at length actually drowned. Thus was this accomplished youth taken off through the base devices of a wicked king, who immediately restored his creature Ananel to the pontifical dignity.

Herod, in order to wipe off all suspicion of so foul a deed, visited Alexandra, and, to give his abominable hypocrisy an air of sincerity, affected the most poignant grief for the fate of Aristobulus, whom he represented to have lost his life by an unhappy accident. He expended a large sum in a splendid funeral for him, and himself acted the part of chief mourner.

This hypocrisy, however, was easily seen through, and justly detested, by all about the court, but by none more than Alexandra, who was inconsolable for the loss of her beloved A-

ristobulus; nor could she have survived it but for the hopes of obtaining revenge on the perfidious murderer. To this purpose she again had recourse to Cleopatra, whom she acquainted with the untimely death of her son, and the manner in which it was effected. She represented the villainy of Herod in such a light, and pictured her own distress on the occasion in such feeling terms, as moved the queen's compassion, and made her resolve to do the utmost in her power to procure some redress. She accordingly made immediate application to Antony, to whom she related the whole story, and besought him to punish Herod for his baseness and perfidy. Antony would willingly have avoided interposing in this matter, but Cleopatra was determined that Herod should be brought to account for his infamous conduct; nor did she cease her solicitations to Antony, till at length she prevailed with him to call Herod to account. He therefore repaired to Laodicea, where he cited Herod to appear before him in order to clear himself of the imputation laid to his charge for the death of Aristobulus.

Herod was too sensible of his guilt to trust to the merits of his cause, and dreading the influence of Cleopatra, who had incensed Antony against him, he was greatly perplexed in what manner to proceed at so critical a juncture. He, however, well knew that it was in vain to dispute the will of the powerful Antony, and therefore made the necessary preparations for obeying his commands. He had, on former occasions, experienced the prevailing influence of gold, and therefore, having provided himself with a considerable sum of money as a present, he repaired, with confidence of success, to Laodicea. This had the desired effect, for by means of the present, and the smooth and insinuating tongue of Herod, he so wrought upon Antony, that he not only exculpated him from every imputation of his having been accessory to the murder of Aristobulus, but gave him repeated tokens of his favour: nay, he even told Cleopatra, that it was beneath the dignity of a king to render an account of his conduct to any person whatever.

Herod, having averted this danger, and secured his interest with Antony, took his leave, and returned to Jerusalem, where he caused it to be propagated about the city, that Antony had conferred on him the highest honours, and that he was the most generous and noble monarch throughout the universe.

When Herod left Jerusalem in order to go to Laodicea to obey the mandate of Antony, he entrusted his uncle Joseph with the administration of the government during his absence, and gave him a particular charge (which he likewise enjoined him to keep a profound secret) that, in case Antony should put him to death, he should not suffer his wife Mariamne to survive the news of it, that none (as he pretended) might enjoy the company of so rare a beauty, and so accomplished a woman, but himself. During Herod's absence some disagreeable words arose between Mariamne and his sister Salome, wherein the queen reproached her with the meanness of her original, in comparison of the royal stock of the Asmoneans from whom she descended. This the other was resolved to revenge; and therefore,

as soon as Herod returned, she accused Mariamne of having had too great a familiarity with Joseph, her husband, whom she was willing to sacrifice, rather than not obtain her revenge on the innocent Mariamne.

This accusation threw Herod into the utmost rage of wrath and jealousy, so that it was with the greatest difficulty he could restrain his passion within the bounds of discreet moderation; however, on cool recollection, he took Mariamne aside, and closely examined her respecting her intimacy with Joseph.

Mariamne, in vindication of herself, said every thing that it might be supposed innocence could dictate; insisting, that, as for any thing which might look criminal, or dishonourable in her conduct, she was not only innocent with regard to Joseph, but (except himself) to all mankind.

Herod, enamoured with the charms of his wife, and overcome by the extremity of his own passion for her, relaxed by degrees from the violent rage into which he had been thrown, and not only absolved her from all suspicion of the crime that had been imputed to her, but confessed himself perfectly convinced that she had not given the least cause of offence. He likewise repeatedly entreated her pardon for that inconsiderate haste which induced him to give credit to a report by which she had been so vilely traduced; and, with tears and embraces, besought her to pardon him for his indiscreet conduct.

Notwithstanding all this appearance of affection Mariamne had some doubts of the reality of Herod's regard for her; but the more she seemed, by her expression and manner, to entertain this notion, the more anxious was he to give her every testimony he could of his sincerity. At length, however, she exclaimed, "Yes, truly, you give an abundant proof of the tenderness of your regard as a husband, by ordering an innocent wife to be put to death, in case you should happen to die first." No sooner had she spoken these words than Herod broke from her arms in the utmost rage, and cried out, with all the fury of a madman, "It is now evident, beyond a doubt, that the purity of my wife has been corrupted by Joseph; for nothing less than the confidence arising from such an intimacy could have induced him to give up so important a secret, which had been committed to his care, with such solemn injunctions not to reveal it." In the first impetuosity of his passion Herod had almost determined to put Mariamne to death on the spot; but, after some violent struggles on his part, the warm affection that lay in his heart prevailed for her preservation. With regard to Joseph, however, he gave instant orders for his being put to death, even without suffering him to speak a word in his own defence; and directed that Alexandra, whom he considered as the author of all the mischief, should be committed to close confinement.

During these transactions at Jerusalem the Roman state was involved in civil broils, owing to a difference that took place between Antony and Cæsar Octavianus. Each made some pretence for their conduct, but the real cause of their disagreement

disagreement was; that both, not being content with *half* of the Roman empire, were each resolved to have *all*, and accordingly agreed to determine the dispute by the sword.

As soon as Herod knew the dissention that had taken place between Cæsar and Antony, he thought it his duty to give what assistance he could to the latter, as an acknowledgment for the many distinguished favours he had received at his hands. He accordingly raised a very powerful army, with which he immediately marched to the assistance of his patron; but Antony, instead of accepting his services against Cæsar, appointed him to proceed against the Arabians, whom he knew to be a false and faithless people, and from whom he had reason to expect some danger.

In obedience to this appointment Herod marched back with his army, and soon arrived in Arabia, having under his command a very considerable number both of horse and foot. The Arabians, having received intelligence of Herod's motions, were waiting to give him battle near a place called Diospolis, towards which he immediately directed his march. As soon as the two armies met a battle took place, which, for some time, was preserved with great obstinacy on both sides, till at length victory declared in favour of the Jews, great numbers of the Arabians being killed, and the rest put to flight.

A short time after this the Arabians assembled another considerable army at a place called Canatha in Cœlo-Syria, of which Herod having received authentic information, and being advised that they were upon their march, advanced with the main body of his troops to that part of the country, intending there to encamp and fortify himself till he should have a favourable opportunity of attacking the enemy with a good prospect of success. As soon as Herod saw the enemy, and of what prodigious strength they were, he thought it necessary to make use of a more than common precaution on the occasion, and therefore gave orders that the camp should be surrounded with a wall: but his soldiers were so elated with the consideration of their former victory, that they besought Herod not to suffer so much time to be lost: they told him they were in the best condition they could be for making an attack on the enemy, and therefore desired they might be permitted to proceed immediately to battle; nay, such was their impatience that they were ready to break through all the bounds of discipline to obtain their desires.

This uncommon ardour and alacrity of the troops gave Herod so much satisfaction, that he was determined to encourage their humour, and not to check that eagerness of disposition, which he thought might, most probably, lead on to victory. He therefore immediately put himself at the head of his troops, grasped his sword in his hand, gave the word of command to march and begin the attack, and told them only to follow the example of his valour. Hereupon they marched forward to the combat with such a determined warmth of bravery that the Arabians were astonished at their courage before the encounter began. For a little time, indeed, they made some faint shew of a slight resistance, but

soon after the first onset, they gave way, and the greater part of them fled in the utmost confusion. This circumstance would, in all probability, have occasioned the total destruction of the Arabian army, had it not been for an officer named Athenion, who having been long an inveterate enemy to Herod, led a considerable body of the natives of Canatha to the relief of the fugitives. In consequence of this they resumed their courage, returned to the charge, routed Herod's forces, pursued them through woods, and other places of difficult passage, and put great numbers to the sword.

After this melancholy issue of the contest Herod was compelled to have recourse to the making depredations and incursions on the Arabians, as opportunity would admit, and, by many small victories, gained some compensation for the capital defeat his army had sustained. He was, however, obliged to seek refuge in the secure places of the mountains of Judea, being afraid to expose his army again to the event of another battle. But the time thus spent was not absolutely thrown away; for his troops (more especially those with which he had reinforced his army) were hereby kept in perpetual exercise, instructed in the duties of military discipline, inured to hardships and fatigues, and in some degree qualified to redeem their lost honour at some future period.

The hopes of Herod in being able to conquer his enemies was greatly checked by a dreadful earthquake that happened in Judea, by which prodigious numbers of cattle were destroyed, and, by the falling of the buildings in the several towns and villages, it was computed that not less than ten thousand people lost their lives; but the soldiers who were in the open fields, escaped with much less injury, for though most of their tents were thrown down yet little other damage took place than some being maimed, and the whole greatly frightened.

Though this Providential calamity was sufficiently terrible in itself, yet it was greatly magnified by report; and the Arabians, imagining Judea to be utterly ruined, cherished the flattering idea that no difficulty would attend their possessing themselves of a province, which now had not a sufficient number of inhabitants to sustain a defence.

The Jews, in the height of their distress, dispatched ambassadors to the Arabians, humbly soliciting terms of accommodation, and that a peace might be established between them; but the Arabians not only put the ambassadors to death, but, in a short time after, marched with a powerful army into Judea, in full confidence of making themselves masters of that country.

As soon as the Jews understood that the Arabians had entered Judea, they were thrown into the utmost consternation. Their spirits were greatly depressed by the reflection of their late calamities, and they despaired of being able to make any resistance against their enemies. Herod seeing this did all in his power to raise their spirits, begged of them to discontinue their unseasonable anxiety, and entreated an exertion of as much courage as might be necessary to prepare themselves for their own defence. Some of the more distinguished of Herod's people felt their misfortunes

fortunes so severely, that while the sense of them was recent in their minds they could not easily be prevailed on to attend to the arguments of prudence and wisdom; but Herod, having prepared them to listen to what he had to say for their emolument and satisfaction, addressed himself to them, and the whole army, in words to this effect:

"It is certainly reasonable to lament the afflictions we suffer from the late Providential calamity; but I must observe that, from a dread of the power of man, to sink into despondency argues a degree of pusillanimity unworthy the character you have hitherto maintained. Notwithstanding our late affliction, I am so far from considering our enemies as objects of fear, that I am inclined to suppose the shocking event was intended by Providence as a temptation to draw the Arabians into our power, that we may take a proper vengeance for the numerous wrongs they have done us: they do not depend on the number or courage of their troops, but rest all their hopes of success in the idea of our being reduced to a state of misery. What hopes can be more deceiving than those which wholly rely on the distresses of our adversaries, instead of being founded on our own virtues? In human affairs nothing can be more uncertain than success and adversity, and in evidence of this assertion it is only necessary to mention the late engagement: we were elated with the idea of a compleat victory, and the next hour subjected to the mercy of the enemy. The foundation of your fears is to me an assurance of success; for great confidence renders people unwary. Our late defeat must be attributed to your inconsiderate and rash behaviour in so uncautiously attacking the enemy, which afforded Athenion the opportunity of turning the event of the battle in favour of his friends. Our deliberations are now conducted with judgment and temper; and hence we may reasonably entertain the hope of victory. Let us preserve our spirits till we come into the field, and then proceed to convince the iniquitous foe that our reputation is infinitely dearer to us than our lives: let us bravely encounter every danger and difficulty rather than yield to the Arabians, whom we have so frequently subjected to our power.

"But whence this consternation on account of the earthquake? Such contentions of the elements arise in the common course of nature, and are to be considered in themselves as calamities, and not as the presages of misfortunes. Signs may, perhaps, appear to predict pestilence, famine, or earthquakes; but when these events arrive, the more violent they are, the shorter is their duration. Suppose we do not succeed in this war, can our sufferings be greater than those we experienced from the earthquake? What fate but ruin can these people expect, who, in violation of all laws, both human and Divine, have barbarously murdered our ambassadors, and impiously offered sacrifices on so melancholy an occasion? Can these betrayers of public faith hope to escape the vengeance of Divine justice? Let them rather tremble at the impending de-

struction that (animated by the glorious spirit of our ancestors) we shall speedily hurl upon them. Re-assume your courage, my brave friends and brother warriors, and let us proceed, not to defend our wives or children, but to avenge the deaths of our ambassadors: the very idea of fighting in the cause of those murdered heroes will animate us to greater exploits than the utmost efforts of the surviving commanders. Cheerfully follow when I lead, and I shall be satisfied. But one caution, however, is necessary: be not rash and precipitate; and rely on my assurance that victory will be the reward of our bravery."

This speech had the desired effect, the soldiers shaking off all despondency, and resuming their natural courage and alacrity. Herod, after having offered up sacrifices, crossed the river Jordan, and encamped his army at Philadelphia, at no great distance from the enemy. Between the two armies was a castle, of which the contending parties were equally desirous to get possession. A party of the Arabians attempted to gain the castle, but the Jews, without much difficulty, repulsed them, and soon after took possession of the hill. Herod daily arranged his men in order of battle, and took every possible method to provoke the enemy to an engagement. In point of numbers the Arabians had the superiority, but the Jews were by far the most courageous and intrepid. A general consternation appeared in the Arabian army, and Abtenus, their general, was particularly alarmed. Herod, being unable to draw the enemy out, attacked them in their entrenchments, and the whole army was thrown into the utmost disorder. During the battle the slaughter was not great; but Herod proving victorious, prodigious numbers of the enemy were slain in the pursuit, and others being trampled to death by their own people, the loss of men amounted to about five thousand. The rest were driven into their camp, where they were soon surrounded and closely besieged by Herod's forces. Being in great distress from want of water they sent ambassadors to offer Herod fifty talents, on condition of his putting a period to the war; but he treated the ambassadors with the utmost contempt, not even condescending to hear the terms they were commissioned to propose. Their thirst at length became so intolerable that, in the space of five days, no less than four thousand surrendered themselves to Herod; and on the sixth day, in the extremity of despair, the rest engaged in battle. On the first attack seven thousand of the Arabians were slain, by which the rest were taught that Herod was a skilful commander; and being thus effectually humbled, they submitted themselves to the protection of the conqueror.

The reduction of the Arabians highly gratified the ambitious Herod; but this sunshine of prosperity was greatly eclipsed by his receiving intelligence of the defeat of Antony at the battle of Actium, by his competitor Cæsar Octavianus. Herod was conscious to himself of the services he had rendered Antony, and was therefore fearful lest the conqueror, on that account, should deprive him of his kingdom, and perhaps again restore Hyrcanus, who had once reigned under the protection of the Romans. These reflections greatly

greatly embarrassed Herod, who at length resolved to remove his own fears by taking away the life of him whom he now considered as his rival in the sovereignty.

While Herod was ruminating on this horrid design, the very family of Hyrcanus furnished him with an opportunity of executing his purposes. Alexandra, the daughter of Hyrcanus, seeing her father careless and unconcerned at the miseries of his family, represented to him the disgrace of suffering the indignities which Herod daily put upon them, and advised him to apply to Malchus, king of Arabia, who would not fail to assist him, adding, that if Cæsar should call Herod to account for his former friendship to Antony, which might reasonably be expected, the crown would certainly devolve to him.

Hyrcanus at first turned a deaf ear to the solicitations of his daughter, but her importunities at length prevailing, he wrote a letter to Malchus, the care of which he committed to one Dositheus, whom he considered as a confidential friend, and whom he believed to be a most inveterate foe to Herod. But in these suggestions he was greatly mistaken, for Dositheus no sooner received the letter than he carried it to the king, thinking it would be more to his interest to solicit his protection than faithfully to discharge the business in which he was engaged by Hyrcanus. As soon as Herod read the letter, he made his acknowledgments to Dositheus for his diligence, and requested that he would carry the letter to Malchus, and bring back his answer, as it would give him the highest satisfaction to know how he would act in so interesting a business; but at the same time strictly cautioned him to keep the whole a profound secret.

Thus directed, Dositheus set forward on his journey, and having delivered Hyrcanus's letter to Malchus, he brought back an answer to the following purport: "That he was willing to give entertainment to Hyrcanus and his family: that if he chose to bring with him all those Jews who remained true to his interest, they should likewise be received in the most hospitable manner: that he was ready to send a proper force to conduct them in safety; and heartily disposed to give Hyrcanus all possible assistance in any way he should require."

On the receipt of this letter Herod sent for Hyrcanus, and demanded of him whether or not he held any correspondence with Malchus king of Arabia. Hyrcanus answered in the negative, upon which Herod produced the letter, and ordered it to be publicly read before the whole assembly. This was accordingly done, and Hyrcanus being thus self-convicted, Herod ordered him to instant death, at which time he was in the 81st year of his age.

"Thus (says Josephus) ended the life of Hyrcanus; a life long and troublesome, and chequered with a vast variety of fortune. He was promoted to the high-priesthood during the reign of his mother Alexandra, and continued to discharge the duties of it nine years, at the end of which his mother died, and he assumed the reins of government. He had not, however, been in possession of the sovereignty above three months when he was expelled by his brother A-

ristobulus. After this he was restored to his former station by Pompey, who put him in possession of all his dignities, and for the space of forty years he continued in the enjoyment of them; but was at length dethroned by Antigonus, suffered the pain and disgrace of having his ears cut off, and was carried away prisoner among the Parthians. After remaining some time in this situation he obtained his liberty, and returned home, flattering himself with great advantages from the friendship of Herod; but in this hope he was so disappointed, that the latter caused him to suffer an ignominious death at a most advanced age, after having experienced so many of the malicious turns of fortune. He was distinguished by the candour and moderation of his disposition, as well as by his regard to the laws of equity. He was remarkable for his love of ease, and generally entrusted the administration of public affairs to the care of others, from a conviction that he was himself ill calculated for the management of them. This easiness of disposition laid the principal foundation of the fortunes of Antipater and Herod; yet, in the end, it so happened, that he fell a sacrifice to that very goodness of temper which ought to have been his protection."

Herod, having obviated all grounds of fear by the death of Hyrcanus, prepared to wait on Cæsar, who, with the assent of the senate and people of Rome, had now assumed the title of emperor, and surname of Augustus. Though he had no reason to expect any indulgence from the emperor yet he determined to apply to him, but, lest his mother-in-law Alexandra might, in his absence, occasion some tumult, he committed the care of the government to his brother Pheroras. His own relations he sent to the castle of Massada, laying strong injunctions on his brother that if any misfortune should arise to them, he should resolutely support his authority, and protect them in his name. His wife Mairanne and her mother he secured in the castle of Alexandrion, with a strong guard under the command of Sohemus, to whom he gave the like kind of order he had before left with his uncle Joseph; namely, that if any violence was offered to his person by Cæsar, he should immediately put the women to death, and use his utmost endeavours that his brother and sons might be rendered secure in the government.

Herod, having given these, and some other directions, respecting what he would have done in his absence, left Jerusalem, and proceeded with all expedition to wait on Cæsar, who was at this time at Rhodes. On his arrival at that city, he immediately made application for being permitted to an audience of the emperor, which being granted, before he entered into his presence he laid aside his diadem, but did not disrobe himself of any other part of his dress that was an ensign of royalty. As soon as he saw Cæsar, disdaining to make needless apologies and idle excuses for what he had to say, he boldly delivered his sentiments to him in words to this effect:

"Illustrious Cæsar (said he) I wait not upon you to disavow the sincerity of a friendship I have always entertained for Antony; and I must be free enough to declare, that if it had
5 P " been

“ been in my power to have made him master of
 “ the world, he had not wanted that distin-
 “ guished station. I acknowledge, great prince !
 “ that I am indebted to Antony for the regal
 “ state I at present enjoy ; and had not my duty
 “ called me against the Arabians, I would have
 “ manifested my gratitude by being personally
 “ with him in the last battle. I did, however,
 “ my utmost to serve him, by supplying him
 “ with soldiers, provisions and money. Not-
 “ withstanding the unfortunate event at Actium
 “ I still entertain for Antony the greatest
 “ warmth of friendship, and venerate him as a
 “ generous patron. Though I could not attend
 “ him in person, yet I gave him such advice
 “ that, had he pursued it, would have been of
 “ the most material advantage. I urged him to
 “ abandon Cleopatra, telling him that while his
 “ connection with her subsisted he would be in
 “ continual danger ; but he chose to proceed in
 “ another mode, and has promoted your interest
 “ rather than his own, for want of an exer-
 “ tion of that prudence which his situation de-
 “ manded. Now though you may have con-
 “ ceived the less favourably of me, because I
 “ attached myself to the interest of Antony, at
 “ a time when you was his professed enemy, yet
 “ I shall not, on that account, hesitate to make
 “ known and defend the services I have done
 “ him, and the perfect esteem I have ever had
 “ for him. If you will, for a moment, advert
 “ to his rank, and the friendship I bore him,
 “ without retrospect to the peculiarities of his
 “ situation, I conceive that you will see so much
 “ of gratitude and good faith in my conduct,
 “ that you may think the acceptance of my
 “ friendship worthy your notice ; for the dignity
 “ of my character will suffer no alteration whe-
 “ ther I vow this friendship to Cæsar or to
 “ Antony.”

Herod delivered this speech with such an air of magnanimity, and accompanied it with so graceful an action, that Cæsar, who possessed a natural greatness and benevolence of disposition, was most wonderfully charmed with it. He treated Herod with particular marks of generosity and regard, directed him to re-assume his crown, and continue to be as sincere a friend to him in future, as he had before been to Antony. “ Preserve (said he) the sovereignty
 “ which you have hitherto enjoyed with so much
 “ honour, and still be happy. Rest assured that
 “ your crown shall be more safely secured to
 “ you ; for the man who is capable of such ex-
 “ alted friendship must necessarily be qualified
 “ for the sovereign authority. Let your friend-
 “ ship for the successful be as steady as it has
 “ been to the unfortunate ; and from the natural
 “ dignity of your mind I shall promise myself
 “ great advantages. I can scarcely censure An-
 “ tony for rejecting your counsel respecting Cle-
 “ opatra, since it is to that act of imprudence
 “ that I am indebted for my late successes.
 “ Be happy in the assurance that you shall be
 “ confirmed in the possession of your kingdom ;
 “ and that my friendship will amply compensate
 “ for your unhappiness on account of the fate
 “ of Antony.”

These generous expressions of Cæsar were immediately followed by the most substantial effects ;

for, putting the crown on Herod's head, he confirmed him in the sovereignty of Judea, the possession of which was farther secured to him by a decree of the senate. This very singular favour, which was granted to Herod through the immediate influence of Cæsar, was a circumstance that gave him equal surprize and joy, it being a favour that far exceeded his most sanguine expectations.

Herod, having thus obtained the favour and interest of the greatest monarch then on earth, returned to Judea, loaded with honour and power. The Jews, on his departure, had considered him as a ruined man, and they were now so astonished at his returning with a greater degree of reputation and splendor than that with which he had left them, that they looked upon him as one whom Providence protected in a peculiar manner, and turned to his advantage all those circumstances which appeared to lead him only into disgrace and danger.

The satisfaction which Herod felt in consequence of his very great success in his late expedition was greatly eclipsed by the disturbances he found among his own family on his arrival at Jerusalem. Mariamne, his beloved wife, as well as his mother-in-law, had been very unhappy on account of the situation in which he left them at his departure, considering themselves rather as prisoners in the castle of Alexandrion (which was really the case) than being lodged there for the security of their persons. Mariamne's mind was filled with the idea that the whole of Herod's professions of regard to her had no farther view than the consulting of his own convenience. The sanguinary tendency of the orders which Herod had before given to his uncle Joseph engrossed all her attention, and being apprehensive that he might have left the like orders with Sohemus, she tried various means to discover if her suspicions were justly founded. For some time Sohemus remained true to his trust, but on Mariamne's treating him with great complaisance, and presenting him with several very valuable articles, he began to recede by degrees, and at length discovered the whole secret with which Herod had entrusted him.

Mariamne was so shocked with these conditional orders, which her husband had repeatedly given respecting her, that she conceived the greatest antipathy against him ; and such was the horror and dread of her mind at the thoughts of living with a man who could entertain such sentiments, that she made it the subject of her daily prayers that he might never return to her alive : and, at a future period, when she had it not in her power to conceal her sentiments any longer, she acknowledged this circumstance in the most open and explicit manner.

As soon as Herod returned from Cæsar, he immediately repaired to his beloved wife Mariamne, and delivered to her the happy tidings of his success, at the same time embracing her with the most tender affection. But while he was relating the circumstances of events which he thought would afford her the greatest satisfaction, she looked about her with an air of the most perfect indifference, without paying the least kind of attention to his narrative. She was, in fact, perfectly unreserved in her neglect ; and be-
 ing

ing a woman who prided herself in acting without disguise, she took no pains to assume a look foreign from her heart, but gave Herod the opportunity of reading in her countenance that his good news and endearments afforded her much more pain than satisfaction.

This apparent aversion in Mariamne tortured the mind of Herod, who, partly through the indignation he felt at finding his love rejected, and partly through his confusion from the transports of his rage, was, for a time, almost distracted. He saw not how to gratify his love without offering violence to his resentment; and at the same time he dreaded giving a scope to his vengeance more than the opposite extreme, for he felt a principle of self-love in his breast, which told him, that should he take vengeance on his wife, the most unhappy consequences would arise to himself, when future experience should convince him that life was not to be supported without the endearments of her conversation.

This restless anxiety of Herod's mind leaving him in doubt how he should conduct himself with regard to Mariamne, his mother and sister Salome thought this a fit opportunity of increasing the difference between them, by doing all kinds of ill offices, and propagating every species of calumny that might tend to promote that hatred which was already growing apace in the breast of Herod. In consequence of this Herod became daily more and more discontented in his mind, and behaved with a greater degree of severity to his wife. On the contrary, Mariamne took not the least pains to disguise the discontent which rankled in her heart; so that the violent regard that Herod had entertained for her, was, by degrees, converted to the utmost rancour and hatred, and it is probable she might have fallen an immediate sacrifice to his resentment had it not been for the following unexpected incidents.

Just at this juncture Herod received intelligence of the deaths of Antony and Cleopatra, and that Egypt was then in the possession of Cæsar. On the receipt of this information Herod lost not a moment in repairing to his patron, leaving his family in the greatest disorder, and once more committing Mariamne to the care of Sohemus, to whom he had made some acknowledgments for his former services.

When Herod arrived in Egypt, he was received by Cæsar with the greatest respect and kindness; and having, in his return, accompanied him to Antioch, he so far ingratiated himself with Cæsar on the way, that he granted him several places in augmentation of his dominions, and, for ever after, of all the tributary princes in the Roman empire, gave him the first place in his favour.

But how prosperous soever Herod was in his affairs abroad, on his return he found nothing but trouble and vexation at home. Mariamne still retained her resentment for the cruel commission given to Sohemus; so that when Herod offered her his caresses she not only rejected them with the utmost aversion, but reproached him in the most bitter terms, for the deaths of her relations, which enraged Herod to such a degree that he could hardly forbear laying violent hands

on her. This fit of rage Salome (the sister of Herod and most implacable enemy to Mariamne) took the advantage of, and sent in the king's butler (whom she had before suborned for the purpose) to accuse the queen of having tempted him to give him poison. Herod had heretofore met with sufficient cause of vexation; but the astonishment with which he was struck at this information drove him to the very verge of distraction. As soon as he had a little recovered himself he ordered Mariamne's favourite eunuch (without whose privacy he knew she would not do any thing that was of a material nature) to be put to the torture. Obedience being paid to this order, the eunuch was strictly questioned; but nothing could be extorted from him till, in the extremity of his anguish, he dropped some words, intimating, that the uneasiness of Mariamne arose from something that had been communicated to her by Sohemus. The sufferer had hardly pronounced these words, when Herod burst into the most passionate exclamation, declaring that "Sohemus, who had hitherto been
"so loyal a subject, and approved himself so
"true a friend both to his king and country,
"never could have betrayed a secret of so important a nature as that with which he had
"been entrusted, but in the confidence of illegal familiarities with Mariamne." He therefore gave immediate orders that Sohemus should be put to death; having done which he directed that his wife should be summoned to take her trial before a court of justice, and appointed for her judges a number of persons devoted to his will.

When the day of her trial arrived, the charge exhibited against her was, having conspired to poison the king. Herod was more violent against her, both by his words and actions, than was consistent with the conduct of any man in a court of justice, and the judges, observing the disposition of the king, followed his example, and Mariamne was pronounced guilty of the charge exhibited against her. Herod, however, relenting of his conduct, observed that it would be more prudent to spare her life, and detain her in prison, than put her to death; which proposition was approved of not only by the judges, but the greater part of the assembly. But this was over-ruled by Salome and her adherents, who were violent to the most extreme degree in their exclamations for immediate justice; and in consequence of what they urged, that a revolt would happen among the people if the queen's life was spared, Herod was prevailed on to agree to her execution, and a day was accordingly appointed for the tragical scene.

As soon as Alexandra found to what extremity the proceedings against her daughter had been carried, she had every reason to apprehend that her own life was in danger. In order, therefore, to avoid the dreadful consequence, she descended to a conduct that was altogether derogatory to the dignity of her character. Her fears at this juncture induced her to go such lengths, and she was so desirous of not being thought to have combined with her daughter, that she sought every opportunity of traducing her character, representing her as the most base and ungrateful of women, and extolling the justice of that sentence

tence which had doomed her to death for conspiring the destruction of a husband to whose tenderness she lay under such unbounded obligations.

Alexandra carried this hypocritical behaviour to such a degree that she became universally despised, as one who could condescend to insult her daughter during the extremity of her misfortunes; but Mariamne, even while she was conducting to the place of execution, spoke not a word in answer to all she had heard of her mother's unnatural behaviour, though her countenance testified the sense she entertained of the shameful part that her mother had acted. In short, Mariamne maintained her spirits with the greatest degree of firmness and constancy, not exhibiting, even by the change of her complexion, that she was in the least terrified at the thoughts of approaching death. In a word, she died in the same manner she had lived, a pattern of courage, disdaining fear, and proving herself capable of sustaining the most severe trials*.

After the death of Mariamne the passion which Herod had entertained for her in her life-time displayed itself with redoubled violence. When he came to reflect upon the sentence which he had ordered to be carried into execution he broke out into the strangest and most unmanly exclamations, frequently repeating the name of Mariamne, and saying, that her blood cried aloud for vengeance. The agonies of his mind increased to such a degree that he sought to divert his melancholy by drinking, feasting, keeping much company, and a variety of other entertainments: but all these endeavours proved fruitless, and instead of finding any relief he grew delirious, talked in a raving manner, and, while the fits of phrenzy were on him, would frequently call for Mariamne, and direct that she should be brought before him †.

Herod's disorder daily increasing on him, he retired to a private country seat near Samaria, hoping that the difference of air, and being detached from the noise of the court, might do him some service. Before, however, he had been long in this retreat, he was attacked with an illness much more violent than the former, and attended with such a racking pain and inflammation in the head, that he was not master of his own conduct. The prescriptions applied for his relief were found to do him more injury than service, so that his case was considered as no other than hopeless. The difficulties that

arose in the attempt to conquer this disease, the peculiar situation of the patient, and the impossibility of relieving him in the regular way, being considered, the physicians reflected that it would be in vain to interpose their advice any longer, and therefore left him entirely to his own management, and the event to Providence, only commanding that he might be gratified in every thing he desired.

The wretched situation of Herod being made known to Alexandra, who was then at Jerusalem, she, after reflecting on the circumstance, began to consider whether or not it might be possible for her to obtain possession of some of the strong fortresses about Jerusalem. She was particularly desirous of becoming mistress of two above the rest, one of which was situated in the city, and the other close adjoining to the temple, being assured that the people must be altogether at the mercy of the party who should be in possession of those two towns. In order to accomplish her design, she made application to the governors of these respective fortresses, whom she addressed in words to this effect: "I need not (said she) inform you of the very deplorable state of the king's health; wherefore I entreat you that the two fortresses may be given up to the possession of the mother of the king's wife and the children of Herod and Mariamne, lest, in case of his death, a different family should succeed to the throne; and even if the king should recover, the hands of his nearest relations are those in which the government may with most safety be trusted."

The governors (one of whom was named Achiab, and nephew to Herod) partly from a sense of their duty, but chiefly from an enmity they had to Alexandra, refused to acknowledge the force of her arguments for delivering up the towers, telling her it would ill become them to make a kind of prejudication of the king's life, for whom, during many years, they had entertained the most perfect friendship and loyalty. No sooner was their conversation ended than Achiab immediately repaired to his uncle, and gave him a particular account of the proposal that had been made by Alexandra. Herod, who was at this time much recovered from his illness, was enraged to the highest degree, and without admitting Alexandra into his presence, or suffering her to say any thing in her own defence, sent immediate orders that she should be put to death.

These

* The character Josephus gives of this amiable princess is to the following effect: "She was (says he) a woman who would have been superior to all her sex, but that she had too great a mixture of passion and pride in her disposition. Her beauty was so great, the graces of her person so extraordinary, and the charms of her conversation so singular, as not simply to render her superior to all other women, but so much so, as not to admit of any degree of comparison. Now these super-eminent gifts and qualifications tended in a great degree to the advancement of her misfortunes, by occasioning the unhappy life she led with her husband. He was enamoured of her beyond all description: he neither opposed her will nor denied her any thing, but permitted her to do what she pleased, and indulged her in every gratification she chose. This, perhaps, might give rise to those frequent and inconsiderate

reproaches which she cast upon Herod, without reflecting that she was thereby destroying her own happiness: for by this kind of conduct she rendered herself obnoxious to the mother and sister of her husband; and finally, to herself, whose affection she conceived to be so excessive, that it could not, by any circumstance whatever, be alienated, more especially to such a degree as to effect her life."

† While Herod was in this distracted state a most dreadful plague broke out in Jerusalem, which raged with such prodigious violence, that persons of all ranks and degrees fell sacrifices to its rigour, and many thousands were taken off in a very short space of time. This dreadful calamity was universally considered by the people as a just judgment consequent on the murder of the unfortunate and innocent Mariamne.

These orders were accordingly executed, and thus did Alexandra meet with a just punishment for the perfidy and baseness with which she had treated her own daughter in the height of her misfortunes.

Soon after this Herod quite recovered of his illness, but it produced a very strange and singular alteration both in his body and mind, particularly the latter. His disposition was totally altered, and he became so extravagantly cruel and ferocious, that the least trifle that ruffled his temper incited him to acts of singular barbarity, and either friends or foes were equally the objects of his vengeance.

Herod had two sons by his wife Mariamne, the one named Alexander, and the other Aristobulus, both of whom he sent to Rome for the benefit of their education. These two youths, on their return home, (which was soon after Herod had recovered from his illness) fell under their father's displeasure by the arts of the very same people who had been the cause of their mother's death. They unwarily let fall some rash words expressive of their resentment at their mother's hard usage, with threats of revenge upon those who had been the authors of it. All this was carried to their father, with such malicious glosses and comments on it as made him believe that they were hatching ill designs against his person. He was naturally of a jealous temper, and this was so improved by the artifices of Pheroras and Salome, his brother and sister, that he resolved to inflict some severe punishment on his two sons, and for that purpose had them seized, and placed under confinement.

But before Herod took any step towards executing his design upon his sons, he thought proper to write a letter to Cæsar, in which he told him of their undutiful behaviour, that they had laid a plot against his life, and designed to have made an escape out of his dominions; and therefore begged he would be pleased to give him advice in what manner he should act on the occasion.

The advice Cæsar gave Herod was, to call together a council at Berytus in Phœnicia, and enquire into the nature of the offence his sons had committed. This Herod accordingly did; but when he came into the assembly, which consisted of an hundred and fifty persons whom Cæsar had appointed (except Archelaus, king of Cappadocia, who being father-in-law to Alexander, was thought by Herod too much engaged by that relationship to be an impartial judge in this matter) he began to accuse his sons with great vehemence and passion, and after having spoken in terms very unbecoming a father, he said, "That not only Cæsar had made him master of his sons destiny, but that the very laws of the Jews declared that, if a son was accused by his parents, and they put their hands upon his head, all who were present should stone him and put him to death; and therefore, though he might treat his sons in this manner after the crimes whereof they stood convicted, yet he chose rather to have their opinions upon the matter, not doubting but that they would join with him in giving an example to future ages, of that just severity

" which ought to be ever used upon unnatural children."

Saturninus, a man of a consular dignity, who was at the head of the council, was for punishing Alexander and Aristobulus, though not with death, and his three sons, who were present with him, concurred in the same opinion; but Volumnus pronounced that they were worthy of death, which the majority of the assembly too readily agreeing to, the dreadful sentence was accordingly passed.

On this occasion the greater part of the people pitied the two princes, but no one durst speak plainly for fear of incurring the king's displeasure, except an old officer named Tyro, who had a son about the age of Alexander that had been honoured with the friendship of the young prince. This man made no scruple to speak his mind with freedom, nor hesitated to deliver those truths which were concealed by others. He made frequent and public declaration that all sense of honour and justice were banished from the face of the earth; that chicanery and ill-will had usurped their places, and so deluded the minds of the public that all ideas of right and wrong, of good and evil, were equally confounded. This freedom of behaviour attracted the notice of all the hearers, and those who would have been fearful of proceeding so far themselves could not but esteem the man who risked his life in the public cause, by openly speaking those truths which others took the greatest pains to conceal.

Old Tyro could not be satisfied with what he had spoken to the people, and therefore resolved to communicate the sentiments of his mind, with equal freedom, to the king himself. He accordingly made application for a royal audience, which being granted, he addressed himself to the king in words to this effect: "If, Sir, I do not give vent to the sentiments of my heart I must be wretched indeed. I am not insensible of the danger of the office I have undertaken, nor of the language I am about to utter. The danger will be my own; but service and advantage will accrue to Herod if he pleases to pay a proper regard to what I have to say. Will you give me leave to ask, Sir, if you retain your former understanding, and the sense of things you heretofore entertained? Where is that greatness of mind, that dignity, that resolution, which carried you through great difficulties in times past? Do you recollect what is become of your friends and relations? Are they all lost? For it is impossible that I should include in that number those who can behold the accumulating miseries of your court and family, once so happy, and express no concern for the melancholy change of affairs! Are you totally blind, Sir, to your own interest? Cannot you perceive what an unhappy turn your circumstances are taking? Are you determined on the destruction of the children of a wife who was once so dear to you, and who have themselves so many virtues to recommend them? Do you not perceive, by the utter silence, and profound astonishment of the people, that your own conduct is tacitly con-

" demned,

“demned, and the fate of your sons lamented
 “by the public? And let me inform you, Sir,
 “that with regard to the military in general,
 “officers and common soldiers included, they
 “have the utmost commiseration for the fate of
 “the young princes, and are perpetually cur-
 “sing those to whom they conceive their dis-
 “tresses are owing.”

While Tyro was representing the treachery of the conduct of those who ought to have served him with fidelity, Herod heard him with a tolerable degree of patience; but thinking he exceeded the bounds of discretion, and violated the laws of good manners, by the bold, intrepid, and expostulatory manner of his discourse, his freedom became very disagreeable to the king. Herod, resenting the supposed insult, demanded to know the names of those officers and soldiers in particular who had spoken with the freedom that Tyro had mentioned. Tyro made no scruple of giving up their names; on which the king gave immediate orders that not only the informer, but all the persons accused, should be apprehended and committed to prison.

Some days after this event had taken place Tryphon, the king's barber, went to Herod, and offered himself as an evidence against Tyro, declaring that he had, in the name of Alexander, repeatedly made him offers of money on condition that, when he went to shave the king, he would take an opportunity of cutting his throat. Hereupon orders were given that Tyro and his son should be put to the torture, which was accordingly done, but they both denied every thing that was charged against them. On this Herod ordered an increase of Tyro's torments, till the son, commiserating his father's sufferings, promised the king a full discovery if he might be pardoned. In consequence of this he was taken from the torture, when he declared that his father had resolved to murder Herod with his own hands as he had private access to him; and that he was determined to do this for the service of Alexander, whatever might be the consequence to himself.

This story was credited by some, while others supposed it was only a contrivance of the youth to get his own pains remitted. But be this as it may the confession so enraged and intimidated Herod, that he sent his two sons immediately to Sabaste (formerly called Samaria) and there ordered them to be strangled; which dreadful sentence was accordingly executed, and their bodies afterwards deposited in a sepulchre at Alexandria.—Thus ended the lives of these two unfortunate brothers, who, by too much expressing their resentment for their mother's death, provoked those who had been the chief authors of it, by the like artifices, to procure theirs.

Besides these two sons of Mariamne Herod had another (which was the eldest and named Antipater) by Doris, a woman of no quality, and whilst himself was a private man; for which reason he kept him and his mother, for some time, at a distance from court. But when he began to take offence at Alexander and Aristobulus, his two sons by Mariamne, he thereupon treated Antipater with particular distinction, and, in a full assembly of the people, declared him his immediate heir to the crown.

After the deaths of Mariamne's sons, Antipater (whose ambition had long made him desirous of getting the sovereignty into his own hands) finding he had nothing that impeded his wishes but the life of his father Herod, he resolved, with all expedition, to remove that obstacle. To effect this he formed a conspiracy with his uncle Pheroras, (who at this time was in some disgrace with his brother the king) to have him poisoned. But, that there might be no suspicion of his being concerned in this base and perfidious scheme, he procured some of his friends to send for him to Rome, on pretence of waiting on Cæsar, and during his absence Pheroras was to execute the intended design against the life of the king.

Antipater had not long left Jerusalem when Pheroras died, and by some means or other the whole plot was discovered to Herod. In consequence of this Herod wrote to his son, without giving the least hint of the discovery that had been made, to hasten home, lest something should happen in his absence that would be greatly prejudicial to his interest. Antipater no sooner received these orders, than, (not having the least suspicion of what had passed) he immediately left Rome, and repaired, with all expedition, to obey the royal mandate.

As soon as Antipater arrived at Jerusalem he immediately repaired to the palace, where Herod, with Quintilius Varus (who succeeded Saturninus in the government of Syria) happened to be together in council, and were in the actual discharge of public business. The servants who attended the gates of the palace no sooner saw Antipater approach than they immediately threw them open, but he had no sooner entered than they instantly shut them to keep out his attendants. This appeared strange to Antipater, but being in haste to see his father, he did not think proper to stop to enquire the cause. As soon as he entered the council-chamber he was proceeding to address himself to Herod with all the marks of filial duty and affection; but, as he approached, Herod extended his hand to stop him, and, with a look of indignation, exclaimed, “Shall I submit to the embrace of a parricide?” “Curst be that impiety which prompts thee to approach me till thou hast obviated the criminal charges against thee. For what purpose thinkest thou that Varus thy judge appears but to pass sentence agreeable to thy desires? Therefore be gone, and prepare for thy defence against to-morrow, for I shall not allow thee a longer period.” Astonished at these words Antipater was unable to reply, and immediately retired in gloomy silence. His mother and wife going afterwards to him informed him of every thing that had passed, by which he was in some degree recovered from his stupefaction, and enabled to prepare himself for the approaching solemnity.

On the following day a numerous council assembled, Varus presiding as judge, assisted by Herod and a great number of their friends. Herod immediately ordered all the witnesses to be brought in, among whom were several of the servants of Doris (the mother of Antipater) who had been long in confinement. These servants produced letters (which had been written though
 not

not sent) from the mother to her son, the substance of which was to this effect: "Your father is informed of all that has passed; therefore be cautious how you come near him, unless you can absolutely rely on the protection of Cæsar." Soon after these witnesses were introduced, Antipater came into the court, and, throwing himself at his father's feet, said, "I humbly entreat you, Sir, to hear me with impartiality: prejudge not my cause; and I have not a doubt of adducing the fullest proofs of my innocence."

Herod, with an air of authority, commanded Antipater's silence; after which, turning to Varus, he addressed himself to him as follows: "I am assured, Varus, or any other unbiassed judge, must be convinced that Antipater is deserving of death; but, in the interim, I dread the opinion you may form of my malignant fortune; as if my being the father of such children had brought such calamities upon me. With regard to the young men that are now no more, I had intended them for the government, and caused them to be educated at Rome, in the court, and under the auspices of Cæsar, that they might be the better qualified to govern: yet, when I had raised them to the envy of other princes, they became the greatest enemies of my peace and safety. Antipater, however, sought to profit by their ruin, by securing the succession of the sovereignty to himself: yet how am I requited by this monster of iniquity, who has concerted schemes against my life, in return for kindness! He thought, and he was grieved to think, that I should live too long; nay, that I had already done so. He could not be contented with the possession of the crown, unless he waded to it through the blood of his father: and I must own that I laid the foundation of this conduct, by bringing him to court from a private condition, and declaring him my successor, in preference to the sons born of Mariamne. I must freely acknowledge to you, Varus, the error of my proceedings. It was wrong in me to deprive my sons of the succession in favour of Antipater; nor did I ever shew them the favour I evinced towards him. The united wickedness of all the rest of my family equals not that of Antipater; the proofs against them fall very short of what I have against him; yet has he the audaciousness to plead innocence, nor does he despair to confound the truth by artifice. Be guarded, Varus. He will recite his tale with plausibility; but I know him in all his disguises, and am assured of the baseness of his heart."

Herod, having finished his speech, requested Nicolaus of Damascus, his old and assured friend, whom he knew to be a perfect master of the whole subject, to proceed in the business that laid before them, by examining those witnesses whose evidence would tend to convict his son of the crime laid to his charge.

Antipater, however, interrupted him, by beginning to make a defence of his conduct, in which he intimated that his father's kindness to him was a tacit acknowledgment of his own merit; and assumed to himself the credit of having discharged his duty in every instance:

"What probability (said he) can there be, that after having prevented the effects of the treachery of so many other people against my father, I should myself act the part of those very traitors whose conduct I had censured, and bring so much disgrace on a reputation obtained by so many acts of firm and unshaken loyalty? What wish, what ambition could I have to become greater or more distinguished than I was already? Is it to be supposed I could be so weak as, the dignity of my situation considered, to act the part of a villain, only to be a loser by such conduct? For the succession was already settled upon me, and ratified by all the forms that law could give it; and, through the goodness of the king, I was admitted to such a proportion of the exercise of the royal power, that I was in actual possession of the government, rather than in the view and expectation of it: nor did any person dare to controul my actions, or presume to controvert my right. Why, then, should I causelessly struggle through imminent danger, for the obtaining of that which had already devolved to me, and of which I had the peaceable possession, in consequence of my superior virtue? Why should I expose myself, in the hope of an uncertain gain, to the utmost degree of certain infamy? It is still less likely that I should have acted thus, when I saw the consequences of false ambition, in the trial, conviction, and execution of my brothers. I acknowledge myself to have been accessory to their fate; and I pride myself in my conduct in that affair, of which I shall never repent, as I conceive it was the strongest proof that I could have given of my filial regard, and the inviolable love and duty that I bore to my father. With regard to my conduct while I was at Rome, I dare make my appeal to Cæsar himself, whose wisdom is such that he cannot be imposed on; and I could likewise appeal to a number of letters under his own hand, in my favour, which I am able to produce. Now I would wish to ask if it would not be a bad precedent to credit the calumnious reports of abandoned men, who are my professed enemies, against the authority of such respectable evidence? Men who are a disgrace to their nature, and are never so happy as when they are involving the royal family in difficulties? These people have now taken the advantage of my absence to propagate false and scandalous reports to my prejudice, which would never have been listened to, or had the least regard paid to them, if I had been on the spot to have defended my own conduct."

When he had almost finished his speech, he made an observation on the absurdity of the custom of examining people by means of the torture, which he said was full as probable a method of extorting a falsehood as a truth: since the extreme pain that was inflicted on the sufferer would induce him to assert any thing the tormentor pleased; especially as the torments were continued till such confession was made. Notwithstanding this, Antipater himself offered to submit to the torture, and rest the credit of his cause on the event. He delivered his speech in so emphatical a manner, attended by such force

of action and expression, and accompanied it with such a profusion of tears, that the council were greatly concerned, and those who were his most professed enemies seemed to lament his situation: even Herod himself appeared to be affected, and to pity his case, though he endeavoured all he could to conceal the emotion of his mind.

Antipater having made his defence, and the witnesses given their evidence, Nicolaus of Damascus resumed the cause, enquired into every particular article, recited the names of the witnesses, summed up the proofs, and remarked on the confessions of those who had been put to the torture. He then proceeded to make remarks on the king's bountiful temper, the care and tenderness he had exhibited in the education of his children, and how ill that care had been requited. With regard to Alexander and Aristobulus, he said, that though they were not influenced by motives of interest, they were actuated by ambition, and impelled by the ardour of youth, and the heat of blood; it was therefore the less to be wondered at, if the evil advice and example of bad company had seduced them to a departure from the strict line of their duty: but with respect to the conduct of Antipater, he said that it was worse than brutal; for that beasts, even of the most ferocious kinds, entertained a sort of mutual gratitude to those who fed and protected them: whereas the young man in question was so far from being influenced by the kindness and indulgence of a tender parent, that even the unfortunate examples that had been made of his brothers, could not deter him from copying their vices; but, on the contrary, he seemed to pride himself on the cruelty and exemplary wickedness of his conduct.

Nicolaus now addressed himself to Antipater in the following manner. "Was it not you that first discovered the design of your brothers? Who but yourself was the prosecutor? Did not you direct the sentence, and of course occasion the punishment? I do not mean, in the present instance, to reflect on that zeal and indignation by which you might be supposed to be inspired in so just a cause; but I am astonished to find that you should have been so inveterate against your brothers, for a crime of which you yourself are now guilty. This is to me an undoubted proof that you did not so much consult the preservation of the father, as the destruction of the sons; that you sought, by acting the part of a severe brother, to obtain the credit of an affectionate and dutiful son, by which means you flattered yourself, that, with the greater security, you might make an interest with the king. And this, in fact, is the plot that you have been concerting: else, how should it happen that the brothers were doomed to death, while their accomplices were spared? What could be the intention, what the view in this proceeding, if you and the accomplices had not a perfect understanding of each other? That, after they had assisted you in one scheme of villany, they might be at your command to lend their aid towards the perpetration of another? By this mode of proceeding you had a double pleasure in contemplating the

intended wickedness; for, in the first place, you thought to make a most impious transaction pass through the world, as an honourable deed of virtue and filial piety; and, in the second instance, you intended to have caused the execution of a horrid scene of barbarity, and subjected suspected persons to that punishment which would have been due to the actual perpetrators of the crime. If you had been a severe detester of the proposed malicious proceeding, you would not have been so ready to have given it the sanction of your imitation. However, you have had the address and contrivance to destroy those first whose enormities were less than your own, by which means you have disclaimed all complicity in the action, and determined to have neither rivals nor witnesses of your conduct: and this being done, it was your resolution to have added the murder of the father to that of the brothers; by which kind of management you thought not only to escape the punishment you merited, but to transfer the weighty consequence of your crimes to your parent, by the perpetration of such a parricide as is almost unexampled in the annals of history: for it was not your intention to have acted this horrid treason against a parent of only common feelings and humanity, but against one whose tenderness and indulgence had been manifested in a very superior degree: for you, the conspirator, had been already chosen to succeed to the government; you already possessed a kind of half property in the crown; you had a previous share in the enjoyment of your father's dignities, and his will had secured to you the reversion of the whole. But (continued Nicolaus) so immoderate and unreasonable were your desires, that it was impossible for his goodness to prescribe any bounds to them, since you meant to regulate them only by the measures of your own perverse will, and ungrateful sentiments. You could not be contented with your own half of the legal rights, without the possession of that which more immediately belonged to your father. You made an artful pretence of being his protector from the insults of others, when, in fact, your plot tended to work his immediate destruction. Nor was this horrid contrivance to be carried into execution simply by yourself; but your mother was to be made accessory to the scheme, your brothers were to be set at variance, and the whole family were to be involved in the bloody business.

"Let me farther ask of you, what idea you can form of yourself after having called your father a beast, since by such language you gave no small proof of your own brutality? But the scandal and malice of your conduct seem to have been destined to reach your relations and benefactors. Nay, such has been the artifice of your management, that, as if your own ill-will was insufficient to incite to a proper degree of revenge, you have demanded the assistance of your guards and counsellors; you have suborned witnesses of both sexes, and all of you have united to seek the destruction of one ancient man. And now, after having caused so many of both sexes,

free

“ free as well as slaves, to be put to the torture
 “ on your account, and after a variety of incon-
 “ testible evidence to your conviction, you are
 “ yet hardy enough to contradict the truth, and
 “ to add to the crime of attempting to take
 “ away the life of your father, that of denying
 “ the authority of those very laws by which cri-
 “ minals are punished: and this conduct of
 “ yours is not only an insult on the equity of
 “ Varus, your judge, but a contradiction to the
 “ principles of natural justice. For what rea-
 “ son should you discredit these testimonies that
 “ have been obtained by the force of torture,
 “ but that you would destroy the credit that is
 “ due to the proofs of your accumulated crimes,
 “ and which, at the same time, have tended to
 “ save your father's life?”

Nicolaus then, addressing himself to Varus, the judge, said, “ Sir, I adjure you by the dig-
 “ nity of the Roman empire, and by that regard
 “ you would have to your own honour, that you
 “ vindicate our sovereign from the insults offered
 “ him by those of his own kindred, by adjudg-
 “ ing to death this most atrocious hypocrite,
 “ who under the pretence of respect to his fa-
 “ ther, sought after the blood of his brothers,
 “ and if he had not now been detected before
 “ his scheme was compleat, would have devoted
 “ his father to destruction, to pave his own way
 “ to the possession of the regal dignity. I am
 “ sure I need not inform you, Sir, that parricide
 “ is a crime of the deepest dye; that it is not
 “ only a private offence against the party im-
 “ mediately injured, but a public insult to the laws
 “ of life and existence. There seems to be so
 “ much of infamy even in the thought, as well
 “ as in the perpetration of this deed, that the
 “ very idea of permitting it to pass unpunished
 “ is an insult to human nature, and to those
 “ laws to which we are all equally indebted for
 “ the preservation of our existence.”

Having said thus much, Nicolaus adverted to some idle words, which, in a disposition to talk at random, had fallen from the mother of Antipater, with regard to prognosticators and wizards that had been consulted, and sacrifices that had been offered, respecting the life of the king, and the knowledge who was to succeed to the crown. He then mentioned several circumstances relative to the debauched life which Antipater had lived in the family of Pheroras; his drunkenness, and his immoderate attachment to women. Many particulars were urged against the prisoner, every article of which was proved, some by voluntary evidence, some by extorted confession, and a third sort on the recollection of the accusing parties, who thought it their duty to stand forth on this occasion; and this sort of evidence was deemed of the most credible kind. Every circumstance now tended to the conviction of Antipater; and those spoke with freedom on this oc-

“ cation; who while he was in power, did not
 “ dare to utter their sentiments. In a word; be-
 “ ing universally detested by the people, they were
 “ free to reveal every ill action of his life.

The situation of Antipater was now wretched beyond description; but the horrors of his mind aggravated every other calamity; since, he had not only the murder of the brothers to answer for, but the malice and rancour that had prevailed through the family, and the proposed treason they were to have combined in committing. His interest seemed to direct all his actions, whether of friendship, or enmity, so that through the whole course of his life he was never known to gain or to lose a friend, but from motives that were selfish in the highest degree: and this contractedness of sentiment by which he was actuated was so well known, that he seemed to be opposed by every honest man, as if it had been a matter of the most absolute impossibility for virtue and Antipater to exist together.

Varus now demanded of Antipater what he had to urge in his own defence; to which he made no other reply, than that he was wholly innocent. Hereupon Varus called for the poison, which had been prepared by Pheroras, (and which it had been discovered was intended for Herod) and giving part of it to a person under sentence of death, he immediately expired. This was so plain a proof of Antipater's guilt that it was out of his power to say any thing in justification of himself; the consequence of which was that he was immediately loaded with irons and put into close confinement.

While Antipater was in prison a false report was circulated that Herod was dead, upon which he begged of his keeper to set him at liberty, and made him large promises if he would comply with his request. This, however, the keeper not only refused, but informed Herod of the offers that had been made by his son; upon which he was so enraged, that he sent for one of his guards, whom he ordered instantly to go to the prison and dispatch Antipater, which orders were accordingly obeyed.

The unfortunate fate of Herod's sons made a strong impression on the minds of the people, and was particularly noticed by the potentates of the neighbouring nations. Cæsar Augustus himself was astonished at such singular catastrophes, and on that account frequently made use of this saying, *that it was better to be Herod's dog than his son.*

But whatever opinion Cæsar might have of Herod it is certain that Herod had no small veneration for him, or, at least, that he carried his compliments to very great lengths. He not only built two stately cities*, and called them both by his name, but in the very city of Jerusalem built a theatre and an amphitheatre, and, in honour of Augustus, ordered games to be celebrated,

* One of these cities was called Sabaste, which signifies the same in Greek as Augustus does in Latin. It was situated on the same spot where Rood Samaria, which Hyrcanus had destroyed, and was in part rebuilt by Gabinius when he was governor of Syria, but, as he was soon turned out of his government, it advanced no farther than a large village, until Herod undertook to finish it, and, in so doing, spared

no cost to make it one of the richest and most beautiful cities in the kingdom.—The other was called Cesaria, though its former name was, the Tower of Straton. It stood by the sea-side on the coast of Phœnicia, upon the pass into Egypt, and the buildings in it, as well private as public, were all of marble.

lebrated, and shows exhibited, agreeable to the custom of the Romans. Nay, to such lengths did he carry his complaisance that he not only set up the Roman ensign (which was the figure of an eagle) over one of the gates of the temple, but even built a sumptuous temple, all of white marble, in memory of the favours which Augustus had conferred on him. These proceedings, however, being inconsistent with the legal constitutions and religion of the Jews, they were greatly disgusted at Herod, and some plots were concerted for taking away his life.

Herod, finding the people were incensed against him for his conduct, resolved, as some amends for the breaches he had made in the laws, to endeavour to recover their good opinions by an act of a public nature. To effect this he formed the design of rebuilding the temple, which, by length of time, as well as the violence of enemies, was in a very decayed and ruinous condition. In the space of two years he got together all proper materials for the work, and in nine and a half more it was finished, and dedicated with all the usual forms and solemnities.

This temple was widely different from Solomon's, as also from that which was built after the captivity, as appears by the following description given of it by Josephus, in whose time it was begun and completed. "The front of this magnificent building (says he) was adorned with many rich spoils which the kings of the Jews had dedicated to God as the monuments of their victories. The middle of it, which was much higher than the two extremes, afforded a very agreeable prospect to the extent of several furlongs to those that either lived in the country, or were travelling to the city. The gate was a very curious piece of workmanship, and from the top hung a variety of rich tapestry of several colours, embellished with purple flowers. On each side of it stood a stately pillar, with a golden vine creeping and twining about it, whose branches were laden with a cluster of grapes, that hung down from the cornices. Round the temple were large galleries, answerable to the rest of the work in magnificence, and in beauty much exceeding all that had been before. The temple was surrounded by three courts or inclosures. The first inclosure, which was a square of a furlong on every side, had a gate on the

east, another on the south, and another on the north side; but it had four towards the west; one leading to the palace, another into the city, and two more into the fields. It was secured without by a strong wall, and within was adorned with stately porticos, or galleries, sustained by no less than 162 columns. They supported a roof of cedar very curiously wrought, and made three galleries; the two outermost of which were of the same dimensions, *i. e.* thirty feet in breadth, fifty in height, and a furlong in length; but that in the middle was half as broad again as the other, and twice as high. The court or area before these galleries was paved with marble of several colours, and, at a little distance, was a second inclosure, formed by an handsome balustrade of stone, with pillars at equal distances, whereon were inscriptions in Greek and Latin, giving warning to all strangers not to proceed any farther, upon pain of death. To this inclosure there was but one entrance towards the east, but, towards the north and south, at equal distances, three. In the middle of these two inclosures, there was a third, which included the temple, strictly so called, and the altar of burnt sacrifices, which was fifty cubits high, and forty cubits wide every way, all built of rough stones, on which no tool had ever been used. Into this court (which none but the priests were permitted to enter) there were nine gates; one towards the east, four towards the south, and as many towards the north; but towards the west there was no gate, only one great wall ran all along from north to south. At the entrance of each gate within were large rooms in the form of pavilions, of thirty cubits square, and forty high, supported by a pillar of eighteen feet in circumference; and the whole was adorned with porticos sustained by two rows of pillars, to the east, north, and south, but towards the west there was nothing but the wall."

The re-building of the temple by Herod was the last remarkable occurrence in the History of the Jews, previous to the incarnation of Our Blessed Redeemer, which, according to most Chronologers, happened in the year of the world 4004, when Augustus Cæsar was Emperor of Rome, and Herod, under the Roman state, had governed the kingdom of Judea about twenty-four years.

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B O O K V.

Containing an Account of the most remarkable PROPHECIES recorded in the OLD TESTAMENT, which have been fulfilled, and still are fulfilling, in different Parts of the World.

C H A P. I.

The Prophecy of Noah, relative to the Descendants of his three Sons.

HAVING, in the preceding Sheets, given an accurate account of every material occurrence related in the Sacred Scriptures, from the creation of the world to the death of the prophet Nehemiah, and from thence to the rebuilding of the Temple of Jerusalem by Herod, we shall, before we proceed to relate the Life and transactions of Our Blessed Redeemer, give a circumspect account of those remarkable prophecies contained in the Old Testament. The predictions of the different Prophets have, indeed, been already noticed in the course of the Work, but in so concise a manner (to prevent interrupting the History) as not to be fully displayed. It shall, therefore, be our business to make these the subject of the present Book, in which we shall point out, first, in what a particular manner the most important events have been foretold, and, secondly, with what punctuality each has been fulfilled.

The first prophecy we meet with in the sacred writings is that of Noah relative to his three sons, namely, Shem, Ham and Japheth. Noah had indiscreetly given a loose to indulgence by drinking too much wine, and, in consequence thereof, was found in a very indecent posture by his sons.

Ham, who first saw him, ridiculed him on that account, and suffered him to continue in the unseemly situation he found him, but on calling his brothers, they, instead of approving of his conduct, covered the nakedness of their aged parent, and lamented that he should have been so indiscreet as to require their assistance on such an occasion.

Noah, in consequence of the different behaviour of his three sons, was, as a patriarch, enlightened, and, as the father of a family who is to reward or punish his children, empowered to foretel the different fortunes of their descendants; this prophecy relating not so much to themselves as to their posterity. Noah was not tempted to do this either from the power of wine or the natural consequences of resenting an injury received; for neither of these could infuse into him the knowledge of events which were to happen many hundred years after. But the Almighty, being pleased to manifest his superintendence and government over the world, endowed Noah with the spirit of prophecy, and enabled him, in some measure, to disclose the purposes of his Providence towards the future race of mankind.

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As soon therefore as Noah found himself thus prophetically

prophetically inspired, after being informed of the behaviour of his sons, he called them into his presence, and immediately pronounced the following curse on Canaan the descendant of Ham: *Cursed* (said he) *be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.* Then turning himself to the other two, he said, *Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant.*

At the same time that the latter part of this prophecy must afford great comfort and satisfaction to Shem and Japheth for their reverence and tenderness to their father, so it must naturally have been a great punishment and mortification to Ham (for his indiscreet and wicked behaviour) to hear of the malediction and servitude of some of his children, and that, as he was abandoned himself, so a wicked race should descend from him.

But the curse thus pronounced upon Canaan (who was the fourth son of Ham according to the order in which his children are mentioned, Gen. x. 6.) is not to be understood as absolutely fixed on him, but on his descendants. A more extensive meaning must be therefore affixed to it, and it must be understood not of a single person, but of whole nations, by means of which a more noble prospect will be opened to us of the wise dispensations of Providence. Neither the curse of servitude pronounced upon Canaan, nor the promise of blessing and enlargement made to Shem and Japheth, are to be confined to their own persons, but to extend to their whole race, and thither we must direct our attention for the full and perfect completion of the prophecy.

The curse upon Canaan was properly a curse upon his descendants, who were afterwards distinguished by the name of Canaanites. From the crime committed by Ham, the Almighty was pleased to commission Noah to pronounce a curse upon them, and to devote them to that service and misery with which their more than common vices and iniquities would deserve. And this account was evidently written by Moses for the encouragement of the Israelites, to support and animate them in their expedition against a people, who, by their sins, had forfeited the Divine protection, and, from the days of Noah, were destined to subjection, slavery and death.

From what has been already said may be easily seen the purport and meaning of this prophecy: it therefore now remains that we proceed to point out the manner in which it was fully completed.

The Canaanites were certainly a most wicked and abandoned people, and for their great sins it was that the Almighty was pleased to inflict the punishment he did on the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, as also those of the adjoining cities and plain. (See p. 24.) They were not only addicted to idolatry, (which was then the case with the greater part of the world) but were guilty of the worst kinds of idolatry. Their religion was bad, and their morals worse; for corrupt religion, and corrupt morals, usually generate each other. Was not, therefore a curse, in the nature of things, as well as in the just judgment of God, deservedly entailed on such a people and nation as this? It was not for the righteousness of the

Israelites that the Lord was pleased to give them the possession of the land of Canaan, but for the wickedness of the people did he drive them out of the country, and he would have driven out the Israelites in like manner had they been guilty of the like abominations. See Levit. xviii. 24, &c.

But the curse itself particularly implies servitude and subjection. *Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.* The descendants, therefore, of Canaan were to be subject to the descendants both of Shem and Japheth; and the natural consequence of vice, in communities, as well as in single persons, is subjection, slavery and death.

This part of the prophecy, however, was not fulfilled till several centuries after it was delivered by Noah, when the Israelites, who were the descendants of Shem, under the command of Joshua, invaded the country of the Canaanites, smote above thirty of their kings, took possession of their land, and made the Gibeonites and others, servants and tributaries; and the rest were afterwards subdued by Solomon. The Greeks and Romans, who were the descendants of Japheth, not only subdued Syria and Palestine, but also pursued and conquered such of the Canaanites as were any where remaining; as for instance, the Tyrians and Carthaginians, the former of whom were ruined by Alexander and the Grecians, and the latter by Scipio and the Romans. From that period the miserable remainder of these people have been slaves, first to the Saracens, who descended from Shem, and afterwards to the Turks, who descended from Japheth; and under whose denomination great numbers of them remain to this day.

Having thus explained the fulfilment of that part of Noah's prophecy relative to the descendants of his son Ham, let us now consider the promises he made to Shem and Japheth. And he said, *Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.* The wickedness of men proceedeth from themselves, but their good from God; and therefore we find the old patriarch, in a strain of devotion, breaketh forth into thanksgiving to God as the author of all good to Shem. God can certainly bestow his particular favours according to his good pleasure, and salvation was to be derived to mankind through Shem and his posterity. By the Lord being called the *God of Shem* is plainly intimated that the Lord would be *his God* in a particular manner. Accordingly we find the church of God was among the posterity of Shem for several generations; and of them, *as concerning the flesh, Christ came.* Rom. ix. 5.

The promise made to Japheth was this: *God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.* That Japheth was more enlarged than the rest is evident, he having much greater possessions, and a more numerous offspring than either of his brothers. The territories of Japheth's posterity were very large, for besides all Europe, great and extensive as it is, they possessed the Lesser Asia, Media, part of Armenia, Iberia, Albania, and those great regions towards the north, which were antiently inhabited by the Scythians, and at present by the Tartars.

This

That the progeny of Japheth was enlarged, as well as his territories, evidently appears from the 10th chapter of Genesis, wherein we find that Japheth had seven sons, whereas Ham had only four, and Shem only five. "And the northern hive (as Sir William Templeman denominates the descendants of Japheth) was always remarkable for its fecundity, and hath been continually pouring forth swarms, and sending out colonies into the more southern parts, both in Europe and and in Asia, both in former and in latter times."

The expression *and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem*, is capable of a double construction; for thereby may be meant either that God, or that Japheth, shall dwell in the tents of Shem. Those who prefer the former construction found their authority on the literal sense of the words in the text, there being no other noun to govern the verbs in the period than the word God. The whole sentence, therefore, according to this, should run thus, *God will enlarge Japheth, and*

will dwell in the tents of Shem.

But let the sense of this expression be taken either way, it is certain that the prophecy hath been most punctually fulfilled. In the former sense it was fulfilled literally when the Shechinah, or Divine Presence, rested on the Ark, and dwelt in the tabernacle and temple of the Jews. In the latter sense it was fulfilled first, when the Greeks and Romans, who sprung originally from Japheth, subdued and possessed Judea and other countries of Asia belonging to Shem; and again spiritually, when they were proselyted to the true religion, and those who were not Israelites by birth, became Israelites by faith.

This first prophecy of Noah's is certainly a most extraordinary one indeed. It was delivered near four thousand years ago, and yet hath been fulfilling through the several periods of time to this day. It is both wonderful and instructive; and is, as it were, an epitome of the history of the World.

C H A P. II.

Of the Prophecies concerning Ishmael, the son of Abraham, by his maid Hagar.

THE next great patriarch we meet with in the Old Testament after Noah is the pious Abraham, who was favoured with several Divine revelations. From him two very extraordinary nations descended, namely, the Ishmaelites and the Israelites, concerning each of which people there are some prophecies of the most extraordinary nature.—See before, page 21, &c.

Ishmael was the son of Abraham by his handmaid Hagar, who was an Egyptian; and though he was not properly the child of promise, yet he was distinguished by some express predictions for the comfort and satisfaction of both his parents.

When Hagar fled from the face of her mistress Sarah, who had dealt hardly with her (see Gen. xvi.) the angel of the Lord found her in the wilderness, and said unto her, *Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands. And the angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael, because the Lord hath seen thy affliction. And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.*

In the next chapter God promises Abraham a son by his wife Sarah, whom he should call Isaac; but notwithstanding this he still reserved a blessing for Ishmael: *Behold (said he) I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly: twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.* After this, when

Hagar and Ishmael were sent forth into the wilderness, God said unto Abraham, *And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed,* Gen. xxi. 13. And the same is repeated by Hagar; (ver. 18.) *I will make him a great nation.*

Now if we attend to the particulars mentioned in this prophecy, and trace the course of events which afterwards took place, we shall find the whole strictly fulfilled, and that a part of it is fulfilling even at this present period.

I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. And again, *Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly.* From these two passages it is manifestly evident that the prophecy does not so much relate to Ishmael himself, as it does to his descendants, whom it is foretold shall be exceeding numerous; and this part of the prediction was most amply verified.

The mother of Ishmael was an Egyptian, and when he grew to years of manhood he married a woman of the same country. In the course of a few years his own children and their descendants became so numerous, that they formed a considerable body of people, and were particularly distinguished for the great traffic they carried on in different parts of Egypt. See Gen. xxi. 21. After this Ishmael's descendants were greatly multiplied in the Hagarenes, who were probably so called from his mother Hagar: in the Nabathæans, who were so denominated from his son Nabaioth: in the Itureans, who were so called from his son Jetur or Itur; and in the Arabs, (especially the Scenites and Saracens) who over-

ran a great part of the world; and his descendants the Arabs are at this day a very numerous people.

Twelve princes shall he beget. This part of the prophecy is of a very particular nature indeed; notwithstanding which it was most strictly fulfilled. The names of these princes are recorded by Moses, (Gen. xxv. 16.) who, after mentioning them, says, *These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their towns, and by their castles; twelve princes according to their nations.* We are not however to understand by this expression that they were so many distinct sovereign princes; but only the heads of so many clans or tribes. Strabo frequently mentions the Arabian *phylarchs* (as he denominates them) or rulers of tribes; and Melo, an heathen historian, tells us, "That Ishmael had, by his Egyptian wife, twelve sons, who departing into Arabia divided the region between them, and were the first kings of the inhabitants; whence (even to our days, says he) the Arabians have had twelve kings of the same names as at the first." After the time of Melo the Arabs were governed by what was then called *phylarchs*, and lived in tribes; and this they still continue to do, as appears by the testimony of Thevenot, Middleton, and other modern travellers.

And I will make him a great nation. This part of the prophecy is repeated several times, and, as soon as the regular course of nature would admit, was fully accomplished. The descendants of Ishmael, in process of time, grew up into a great nation; such they continued for several ages, and, when we consider the prodigious numbers of them that still inhabit the country, they may be still justly called *a great nation*.

And he will be a wild man. Ishmael and his posterity were to be wild, fierce, savage, ranging in the deserts, and not easily softened to society; and whoever has read the accounts given of these people by different travellers must know it to be a true and genuine character. It is said of Ishmael (Gen. xxi. 20.) that *he dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer*: and the same is no less true of his descendants than of himself. *He dwelt in the wilderness*; and his descendants still inhabit the same wilderness, and many of them, from the best accounts we have, both antient and modern, are total strangers to agriculture, neither sowing or planting, but living entirely by plunder and rapine. *And he became an archer*; such were the Itureans and mighty men of Kedar mentioned by Isaiah, chap. xxi. 17. and such the Arabs have been from the beginning to the present time. It was very late before they admitted the use of fire arms in their country, and the greater part of them are still strangers to that instrument of defence; they constantly practice

the bow and arrow, and are esteemed the most skilful archers in the universe.

His band will be against every man, and every man's hand against him. This part of the prophecy has been already explained, as the reader will find by referring to the note in page 22; and therefore we now proceed to the last part, namely, *And he shall dwell in the presence of his brethren*; that is, shall dwell in tents, as many of the Arabs still do, and are therefore called Scenites.

If we reflect on this part of the prophecy we shall, on the first view, think it very extraordinary, that *his band should be against every man, and every man's hand against him*, and yet that he should be able to *dwell in the presence of all his brethren*. But extraordinary as it was this also hath been fulfilled not only in the person of Ishmael, but likewise in his descendants. With respect to Ishmael himself, the sacred historian tells us, that *the years of the life of Ishmael were an hundred and thirty and seven years, and he died in the presence of all his brethren*. Gen. xxv. 17. 18. As for his posterity, they dwelt likewise in the presence of all their brethren, and they still subsist a distinct people, and inhabit the country of their progenitors, notwithstanding the perpetual enmity between them and the rest of mankind.

It may be supposed by some that the reason why these people were never subdued by any other nation is, that the country was never worth conquering, and that its barrenness has ever been its preservation: but this is a mistake, for, by all the accounts we have, though the greater part of it be sandy and barren deserts, yet here and there are interspersed beautiful spots and fruitful valleys. One part of the country was antiently known and distinguished by the name of Arabia the Happy, which appellation it received on account of the natural fertility of the soil, in contrast to the barrenness of the other parts. The whole country of Arabia is, by the oriental writers, generally divided into five provinces, the chief of which is called Yaman, and is thus described by the learned Mr. Sale in his preface to the Alcoran. "The province of Yaman (says he) has been famous from all antiquity for the wholesomeness of its climate, its fertility and riches. The delightfulness and plenty of it are owing to its mountains*; for all that part which lies along the Red Sea is a dry barren desert, in some places ten or twelve leagues over, but in return bounded by those mountains, which being well watered, enjoy an almost continual spring, and yield great plenty and variety of fruits, and in particular excellent corn, grapes and spices. The soil of the other provinces is much more barren than that of Yaman, the greater part being covered,

* The learned and celebrated Charles Theodore Middleton, Esq. (in his New System of Geography lately published) describing the mountains in Arabia, says, "The chief mountains are those of Sinai, Gabel el Ared, and St. Catherine, the former of which deserves a particular description. It hath two summits, and is called by the Arabs, the mountain of Moses, because many remarkable things happened here to that prophet. It was here, they say, that the Almighty appeared to him in the burning bush; and the fathers show a bramble, which they affirm is of the

same kind. Here Moses likewise fed the flock of his father-in-law Jethro; and not far off he struck the rock, out of which instantly gushed water: the stone is of a red granite, about fifteen feet long, ten broad, and twelve high; the opening does not resemble any thing done by a tool, and is somewhat like the mouth of a carved lion: into this aperture the Arabs put certain medicinal herbs, which they afterwards give to their camels, in case they are disordered, thinking them very salutary for any disease."

“ covered with dry sands, or rising into rocks,
 “ interspersed here and there with some fruitful
 “ spots, which receive their greatest advantages
 “ from their water and palm-trees.”

But, however fertile, or however barren and desolate this country might be, yet it was certainly the interest of the neighbouring princes and states, at all hazards, to endeavour to root out such a pestilent race of robbers. This, indeed, (as we have already particularly observed in the note page 22) has several times been attempted, but never accomplished. They have, from first to last, maintained their independency, and, notwithstanding the most powerful efforts have been made to destroy them, they still dwell in the presence of all their brethren, and in the presence of all their enemies.

If we reflect on the respective particulars contained in this amazing prophecy, and the astonishing manner in which each article has been fulfilled, we must easily perceive that the whole, from beginning to end, was guided by the direction of Providence. The sacred historian tells us, that these prophecies concerning Ishmael were delivered partly by the angel of the Lord, and partly by God himself: and indeed who but God, or one raised and commissioned by him, could describe so particularly the genius and manners, not only of a single person before he was born, but of a whole people from the first founder of the race to the present time? It was certainly very wonderful, and not to be foreseen by human sagacity or prudence, that a man's whole posterity should so nearly resemble him, and retain the same inclinations, the same habits, and the same customs throughout all ages. The waters of the purest spring or fountain are soon changed and polluted in their course; and the farther still they flow, the more they are incorporated and lost in other waters. How have the modern Italians degenerated from the courage and virtues of the old Romans? How are the French and English polished and refined from the barbarism of the antient Gauls and Britons? In general men and manners change with the times: but in all changes and revolutions the Arabs have continued the same from the beginning. They still remain the same fierce, savage, untractable, unfocial people they were at first, following in every thing their great ancestor, and being entirely different from all other inhabitants on the earth.

The great affinity that still subsists between the present Arabs, and their progenitor Ishmael, from whom they descended, will appear evident from the following circumstances. Ishmael was circumcised, and so are his posterity to this day; and as Ishmael was circumcised when he was thir-

teen years of age, so (according to Josephus) were the Arabs at the same time. Ishmael was born of Hagar, who was a concubine; and the Arabs still indulge themselves in the use of mercenary wives and concubines. He lived in tents in the wilderness, shifting from place to place; and so do his descendants, particularly those heretofore called Scenites, and those now called Bedowens †. He was an archer in the wilderness; and so are they. He was to be the father of twelve princes, or heads of tribes; and they live in clans or tribes to this day. He was a wild man, his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him; and they still live in the same state of war, their hand against every man, and every man's hand against them.

When we reflect on these strange circumstances, how wonderful does it appear to us that the same people should retain the same disposition for so many ages; but still how much more wonderful is it that, with this disposition, and this enmity against the whole world, they should still subsist an independent and free people. It cannot be pretended that no attempts were ever made to subdue them, for the greatest conquerors in the world have almost all, in their turns, attempted it, and some have been very near effecting it. Neither can it be pretended that the dryness or inaccessibleness of their country hath been their preservation; for their country hath been often penetrated, but could never be entirely subdued. Large armies have found the means of subsistence in their country: none of their powerful invaders ever desisted on this account; and therefore, the reason of their having withstood every effort to conquer them must be imputed to some other cause. This was certainly no less than the Divine interposition, and which will evidently appear if we attend to the following very singular circumstances.

Alexander was preparing an expedition against them when an inflammatory fever cut him off in the flower of his age. Pompey was in the career of his conquest, when urgent affairs called him elsewhere. Cælius Gallus had penetrated far into the country, when a fatal disease destroyed great numbers of his men, and obliged him to return. Trajan besieged their capital city, but was defeated by thunder and lightning, whirlwinds and other prodigies, and that as often as he renewed his assaults. Severus besieged the same city twice, and was twice repulsed from before it; and the historian Dion (a man of rank and character, though an heathen) plainly ascribes the defeat of these two emperors to the interposition of a Divine power.

Indeed, if we consider the whole matter in its proper light, we cannot fail being of the same opinion

† “ The Bedowens (says Mr. Middleton) have no settled place of abode, but fix at such places as will supply them with water, pasture and fruits, subsisting chiefly upon the flesh or milk of their herds and cattle. In this roving life centers all their happiness, and they look upon their more settled countrymen as abject slaves. They sleep in tents or huts, which they pitch in the evening in any spot prescribed either by fancy or convenience. These moveable habitations which are called *ilymas*, from the shade they afford, are of an oblong form, and differ in size according to the number of the people who occupy them; they are covered with the skin of

beasts, and supported, some by one pillar, some by two, and others by three, whilst a sort of curtain or carpet, made of skins, divides the tent into separate apartments. The pillars are strait poles eight or ten feet high, and four or five inches thick, serving not only to support the tent, but being full of hooks, they hang upon them their cloaths, baskets, saddles, &c. When the people retire to sleep, they lay themselves down upon a mat or carpet placed either in the center or a corner of the tent; and such as are married have a corner of the tent divided off by a curtain.”

opinion with this heathen historian; for, without a Divine interposition, how could a single nation stand out against the enmity of the whole world for any length of time, and much more for near four thousand years together? The great empires round them have all in their turns, fallen to ruin, while they have continued the same from the beginning, and are likely to continue the same to the end.

The Arabs are the only people, except the Jews, who have subsisted as a distinct people from the beginning; and in some respects they very much resemble each other, as will appear by the following comparisons:

1. The Arabs, as well as Jews, are descended from Abraham, and both boast of their descent from that father of the faithful.
2. The Arabs, as well as the Jews, are circumcised, and both profess to have derived that ceremony from Abraham.
3. The Arabs, as well as the Jews, had origi-

nally twelve heads of tribes, who were their princes or governors.

4. The Arabs, as well as the Jews, marry among themselves and in their own tribes. And

5. The Arabs, as well as the Jews, are singular in several of their customs, and are standing monuments, to all ages, of the exactness of the Divine predictions, and of the veracity of Scripture History.

We have only one observation more to make on the fulfilment of the very singular particulars contained in the prophecy relative to Abraham and Ishmael; and that is, that they are so incontrovertible as to defeat every attempt that can be made to place them in a fallacious light. We know the predictions delivered to Ishmael to be daily verified in his descendants, and therefore have, as it were, ocular demonstration for our faith; which is proving, by plain matter of fact, that *the Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men*, and that his truth, as well as his mercy, *endureth for ever*.

C H A P. III.

Of the Prophecies concerning JACOB and ESAU.

THE Almighty having been pleased to disclose unto Abraham the state and condition of his posterity by Ishmael, who was the son of the bond-woman, he was likewise pleased to predict some things of a much more important nature concerning the posterity of Isaac, who was the son of his wife Sarah. This son was properly the child of promise, and the prophecies relating to him and his family are much more numerous than those relating to Ishmael and his descendants.

Some time before the birth of Ishmael, the Almighty was pleased to make this promise to Abraham, *In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed*, Gen. xii. 3. But after the birth of Ishmael by Hagar, and Isaac by Sarah, the promise was limited to Isaac; *for in Isaac shall thy seed be called*, Gen. xxi. 12. And accordingly to Isaac was the promise repeated, *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*; which plainly intimated, that the Saviour of the world was not to come from the family of Ishmael, but that of Isaac.

The Almighty had been pleased to promise the land of Canaan to Abraham and his descendants four hundred years before they obtained possession of it, and it was afterwards promised to his son Isaac: *Sojourn in this land* (says the Lord unto Isaac) *and I will be with thee, and will bless thee: for unto thee and unto thy seed I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father*.

This promise was strictly fulfilled soon after the death of Moses (which happened in the year of the world 1447) when the Israelites got pos-

session of the land of Canaan through the assistance and protection of Joshua, who succeeded Moses in the government of the people. See before page 107, &c. In pursuance of these prophecies they remained in possession for several ages; and afterwards, when for their sins and iniquities they were to be removed from it, their removal also was foretold, both the carrying away of the ten tribes and the captivity of the two remaining tribes for seventy years, as likewise their final captivity and dispersion into all nations, till, in the fullness of time, they shall be again restored to the land of their inheritance.

Abraham received a promise from God that his posterity should be multiplied exceedingly above that of others. *I will make of thee a great nation; and in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore*. See Gen. xii. 2. xxii. 17. The like promise was also continued to Isaac, *I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven*, Gen. xxvi. 4.

Not to mention the great increase of the other posterity of Abraham and Isaac, how soon did their descendants by Jacob grow up to a mighty nation, and how numerous were they formerly in the land of Canaan? How numerous were they likewise (according to the accounts we have from Philo and Josephus) in various other parts of the world? And after innumerable massacres and persecutions which they have undergone, how numerous are they still in their present dispersion among all nations? Mr. Balnage (who has written an history of the Jews

as a supplement and continuation of the history of Josephus) says, "It is impossible to fix the number of persons this nation is composed of. But yet we have reason to believe, there are still near three millions of people, who profess the Jewish religion, and, as their phrase is, *are witnesses of the unity of God in all the nations of the world.*"

Isaac had two sons, the one named Jacob, and the other Esau. The descendants of these sons did not incorporate themselves together as one people, but separated into two different nations; and therefore as it had been before specified which of the two, Ishmael or Isaac, was to be heir of the promises made to Abraham, so there was a necessity now for the same distinction to be made between Esau and Jacob.

This was accordingly done, and that in the most ample and clear manner. When Rebecca, their mother, had conceived, *the children struggled together within her*, Gen. xxv. 22. and she received the following Divine revelation: *Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels, and the one people shall be stronger than the other people, and the elder shall serve the younger*, Gen. xxv. 23.

The same Divine spirit influenced and directed their father to give his final benediction to the like purpose: for thus did he bless Jacob: *God give thee of the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine. Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee; be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that bleisseth thee.* Gen. xxvii. 28, 29. And thus did he bless Esau: *Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above. And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.*

But for greater clearness and certainty a more express revelation was afterwards made to Jacob; and the land of Canaan, a numerous progeny, and the blessing of all nations, were promised to him in particular. *I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Israel: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee, and in thy seed, shall the families of the earth be blessed.* Gen. xxviii. 13, 14.

This prophecy, as well as those before mentioned, was not to be verified in the persons of Esau and Jacob, but in those of their posterity. Jacob was so far from bearing rule over Esau, that he was forced to fly his country for fear of him. He continued abroad several years, and when he returned he sent a servant before with a supplicatory message to his brother Esau, requesting *that he might find grace in his sight*. When he heard of Esau's coming to meet him with four hundred men, he *was greatly afraid and distressed*, and cried unto the Lord, *Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau.* Gen. xxxii. 11. He sent a magnificent present before him to appease his brother, calling him his lord and himself his servant.

When he met him, he *bowled himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother*. And after he had found a gracious reception, he made this acknowledgment: *I have seen thy face as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me.*

At this time Jacob had no temporal superiority over his brother Esau; and therefore we must look for the completion of the prophecy among their descendants. The prophecy itself mentions plainly *two nations*, and *two manner of people*, and comprehends these several particulars; that the families of Esau and Jacob should grow up into two different people and nations; that the family of the elder should be subject to that of the younger; that in situation and other temporal advantages they should be much alike; that the elder branch should delight more in war and violence, but yet should be subdued by the younger; that however there should be a time when the elder should have dominion, and shake off the yoke of the younger; but in all spiritual gifts and graces the younger should be greatly superior, and be the happy instrument of conveying the blessing to all nations.

By the first part of the prophecy, *Two nations are in thy womb*, &c. we find that they (that is, their posterity) were not only to grow up into two nations, but into two very different nations. And have not the Edomites (who were descended from Esau) and the Israelites, (who were descended from Jacob) been all along two very different people in their manners, customs and religions, which made them to be perpetually at variance with each other?

And the children struggled together within her. This was a token of their future disagreement, and was fully evinced when they grew up to a state of manhood by their different dispositions and inclinations. Esau was a cunning hunter, and delighted in the sports of the field; but Jacob was more mild and gentle, dwelling in tents, and minding his sheep and cattle. Esau slighted his birth-right and those sacred privileges of which Jacob was desirous, and is therefore called the profane Esau, (Heb. xii. 16) but Jacob was a man of better faith and religion. The like diversity ran through their posterity. The descendants of Jacob were strict observers of the Jewish religion; but those of Esau, (whatever they were at first) became, in process of time, the grossest idolaters. From these religious differences, and on other accounts, there was a continual grudge and enmity between the two nations. The king of Edom would not suffer the Israelites, in their return out of Egypt, so much as to pass through his territories (See before p. 96.) and the history of the Edomites after is little more than the history of the wars between them and the Jews.

And the one people shall be stronger than the other people, and the elder shall serve the younger. The family of Esau was the elder, and for some time the greater and more powerful of the two, there having been dukes and kings in Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel. Gen. xxxvi. 31. But David and his captains made an entire conquest of the Edomites, slew several thousands, compelled the rest to become his tributaries and servants, and planted garri-

sons among them to secure their obedience. See 2 Sam. viii. 14.

After the Edomites were reduced to subjection by David and his captains, they continued in a state of servitude for about an hundred and fifty years, and, instead of having a king of their own, were governed by viceroys or deputies appointed by the kings of Judah. In the days of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, they revolted, recovered their liberties, and made a king over themselves, 2 Kings viii. 20. But after this they were again reduced by several of the princes of Judah at different periods, and most of their principal places destroyed. Judas Maccabeus, attacked and defeated them several times, killing no less than twenty thousand at one time, and upwards of the like number at another. He likewise took their chief city Hebron, and destroyed all the towers and fortresses about it. At length Hyrcanus, the nephew of Judas Maccabeus, took what few cities they had left, and reduced them to the necessity of either embracing the Jewish religion, or of leaving their country and seeking new habitations elsewhere. They thought proper to chuse the former, in consequence of which they submitted themselves to be circumcised, became proselytes to the Jewish religion, and were ever after incorporated with those very people whom they had before considered as their enemies, and with whom they were perpetually at variance.

In one part of this remarkable prophecy it is predicted that, in point of situation, and other temporal advantages, Esau and Jacob should be much alike. It was said to Jacob, *God give thee of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine.* And much the same was said to Esau, *Behold, thy dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above.* The spiritual blessing, or the promise of the blessed seed, could be given only to one; but temporal good things might be given to both. Jacob's situation was in a very fertile and pleasant country; nor was that of Esau's less so. Mount Seir and the adjacent country, was at first in the possession of the Edomites; after which they extended themselves farther into Arabia, as also into the southern parts of Judea. But in whatever part they were situated we find that the Edomites, in temporal advantages, were little inferior to the Israelites, having cattle, and beasts, and substance in abundance. At the time that the Israelites were on their return from Egyptian bondage, the country in which the Edomites then lived abounded with the most fruitful fields and vineyards, as evidently appears from the manner of the request then made by the Israelites for permission to pass through those territories. *Let us pass I pray thee through thy country; we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells.*

It was predicted, in another part of the prophecy, that Esau should delight more in war and violence than his brother, but that he should be subdued by Jacob. *And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother.* Esau himself might be said to live much by the sword, for he was a cunning hunter, a man of the field. He and his posterity obtained possession of Mount Seir

by force and violence, by destroying and expelling from thence the Horites, who were the former inhabitants. By what means they spread themselves farther into Arabia we are not informed; but it appears that, upon a sedition among them, which occasioned a separation, the greater part seized upon the south-west parts of Judea during the Babylonish captivity, and afterwards made that their fixed place of residence.

Both before and after this the Edomites were almost continually at war with the Jews, and upon every occasion were ready to join with their enemies. Even long after they were subdued by the Jews, they still retained the same violent spirit, as appears by the character thus given of them by Josephus, "They were (says he) a turbulent and disorderly nation, always ready for commotions and rejoicing in changes; at the least request of those who besought them beginning war, and hastening to battles as it were to a feast." This character given them by Josephus appears very just, for, a little before the last siege of Jerusalem, they went, at the entreaty of the zealots, to assist them against the priests and people, and there, together with the zealots, committed the most unheard-of cruelties, and barbarously murdered Ananus the high-priest.

There was, however, to be a time when the elder should have the dominion, and shake off the yoke of the younger. *And it shall come to pass when thou shalt have dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.* It is not here said or meant that the Edomites should have dominion over the seed of Jacob, but simply have dominion, as they had when they appointed a king of their own. The whole of this sentence is, in the Jerusalem Targum, thus paraphrased: "And it shall be when the sons of Jacob attend to the law, and observe the precepts, they shall impose the yoke of servitude upon thy neck; but when they shall turn away themselves from studying the law, and neglect the precepts, behold then thou shalt shake off the yoke of servitude from thy neck."

It was David who imposed the yoke on the Edomites (at which time the Jewish people strictly observed the law) and it was very galling from the first. Towards the latter end of Solomon's reign, Hadad the Edomite of the blood royal, who had been carried into Egypt in his childhood, returned into his own country, and raised some disturbances, but was not able to recover his throne, his subjects being overawed by the garrisons which David had placed among them; and in the reigns of the succeeding princes of Judea, they were totally subdued.

We come now to the last part of the prophecy, which predicts that in all spiritual gifts and graces the younger should be greatly superior to the elder, and be the happy instrument of conveying the blessing to all nations. *In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed:* and hitherto are to be referred in their full force those expressions, *Let people serve thee, and nations bow down unto thee; Cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that bleth thee.* The same promise was made to Abraham

ham in the name of God, *I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee*: Gen. xii. 3. and it is here repeated to Jacob, and thus paraphrased in the Jerusalem Targum, "He who curseth thee shall be cursed, as Balaam the son of Beor; and he who bleisseth thee shall be blessed, as Moses the prophet, the lawgiver of Israel."

It evidently appears that Jacob was a man of more religion, and believed the Divine promises more than Esau. The posterity of Jacob likewise preserved the true religion and the worship of one God, while the Edomites were sunk into idolatry. Of the seed of Jacob was to be born the Saviour of the world. This was the peculiar privilege and advantage of Jacob, to be the happy instrument of conveying these spiritual blessings to all nations. This was his greatest superiority over Esau; and in this sense St. Paul understands and applies the prophecy, *the elder shall serve the younger*. Rom. ix. 12.

In tracing this prophecy, as we have done, from the beginning, the whole of it appears to have been most strictly fulfilled. We find that the nation of the Edomites were several times conquered by, and made tributary to, the Jews,

but never the nation of the Jews to the Edomites; and the Jews have been the more considerable people, more known in the world, and more famous in history. We have, indeed, very little more of the history of the Edomites than what is connected with that of the Jews; and where is the name or the nation at this time? They were swallowed up and lost, partly among the Nabathæan Arabs, and partly among the Jews; and, about a century after the birth of Christ, the very name of them was abolished and disused.

Such was the fate of the Edomites for insulting and oppressing their brethren the Israelites, and hereby were fulfilled the prophecies of the other inspired men. See Jeremiah xlix. 7, &c. Ezekiel xxv. 12, &c. Joel iii. 19. Amos i. 11, &c. and lastly, the prophet Obadiah. At this very time we see the Jews subsisting as a distinct people, while the Edomites are no more; and thus is amply fulfilled the words of the latter prophet: *For thy violence against thy brother Jacob, shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. And again, there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau, for the Lord hath spoken it*. See Obadiah, ver. 10 and 18.

C H A P. IV.

Of the Prophecies of JACOB concerning his posterity, but particularly his son JUDAH.

IN the blessing bestowed on Jacob we have two promises, the one temporal, and the other spiritual. The first was the promise of the land of Canaan, and the second the promise of the seed in which all the nations of the earth should be blessed. These promises were first made to Abraham, then repeated to Isaac, and afterwards confirmed to Jacob, who, a short time before his death, bequeathed them to his children.

The temporal blessing or inheritance of the land of Canaan might be shared and divided among all his sons, but the blessed seed could descend only from one. Accordingly, Jacob assigned to each a portion of the promised land, but limited the descent of the blessed seed to the tribe of Judah, and at the same time sketched out the characters and fortunes of the different tribes into which the people were to be divided.—See before, p. 57.

As Joseph was the favourite son of Jacob, he adopted his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim for his own, but foretold that the younger should be the greater of the two. This prediction was fulfilled in a very ample manner, for the tribe of Ephraim grew to be so numerous and powerful, that it was sometimes put for all the ten tribes of Israel.

Of Reuben, the elder son of Jacob, it is said, *Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel*, Gen.

xlix. 4. And what is recorded great or excellent of the tribe of Reuben? In number and power they were inferior to several other tribes.

Of Simeon and Levi it is said, *I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel*. And was not this eminently fulfilled in the tribe of Levi, who had no portion or inheritance of their own, but were dispersed among the other tribes? Neither had the tribe of Simeon any inheritance properly of their own, but only a portion in the midst of the tribes of Judah, from whence several of them afterwards went in search of new habitations, and were thereby divided from the rest of their brethren.

Of Zebulun it is said, *He shall dwell at the haven of the sea, and shall be for an haven of ships*. And accordingly the tribe of Zebulun extended from the Sea of Galilee to the Mediterranean, where they had commodious havens for shipping. And how could Jacob have foretold the situation of any tribe, which was determined two hundred years after by casting of lots, unless he had been directed by that Divine Spirit, who disposeth of all events?

Of Benjamin it is said, *He shall raven as a wolf*: and was not that a fierce and warlike tribe, as appears in several instances, and particularly in the case of the Levite's wife, when they alone waged war against all the other tribes, and overcame them in two battles. See Judges xx.

In like manner Jacob characterises all the other tribes, and foretels their temporal condition, and that of Judah as well as the rest. But to Judah he particularly bequeaths the spiritual blessing, and delivers it in much the same form of words as it was delivered to him. Isaac had said to Jacob, *Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee*, Gen. xxvii. 29. And here Jacob saith to Judah, *Thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee*. And for greater certainty it is added, *The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be*.

The explanation of the greater part of this prophecy hath been already related, as well as the fulfilment of it, in a former part of our Work, as the Reader will see by referring to the note in page 57. It only remains, therefore, that we here take notice of such parts of it as are not there fully explained. And first, with respect to the expression.

Until Shiloh come. This evidently means, (as is agreed by almost all interpreters, both antient and modern) till the coming of the Messiah. And however some may explain the word, and whatever resource they may have for its explanation to the contrary, the Messiah is incontestibly the person intended. The Vulgar Latin translates it, *He who is to be sent*; and to favour this version the following passage in St. John's Gospel is usually cited, *Go wash in the pool of Siloam which is by interpretation sent*: And who was ever sent with such power and authority from God as the Messiah, who frequently speaketh of himself in the Gospel under the denomination of *him whom the Father hath sent*. The Seventy translate it, *the things reserved for him*, or, according to other copies, *he for whom it is reserved*. And what was the great treasure reserved for Judah, or who was the person for whom all things were reserved, but the Messiah? In the Samaritan text and version it is translated *the peacemaker*. And to whom can this, or any the like title, be so justly applied as to the Messiah, who is emphatically stiled the *prince of peace*, Isaiah ix. 6. and at whose birth was sung that heavenly anthem, *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men*. Luke ii. 14.

These are the principal interpretations of the Hebrew word *Shiloh*; and from the whole there cannot be the least doubt but that, by the *coming of Shiloh* was meant the *coming of the Messiah*.

And unto him shall the gathering of the people be. If we understand this of Judah, that the other tribes should be gathered to that, it was in some measure fulfilled by the people going up so frequently as they did to Jerusalem, which was in the tribe of Judah, in order to obtain justice in difficult cases, and to worship God in his holy temple.

Upon the division of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, the tribe of Benjamin, and the priests and Levites, and several out of all the other tribes, went over to Judah, and were so blended and incorporated together, that they are more than once spoken of as one tribe. And it

is expressly said (1 Kings xii. 20.) *There was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only*; all the rest were swallowed up in that tribe, and considered as parts and members of the same.

In like manner, when the Israelites were carried away captive into Assyria, it is said, *there was none left but the tribe of Judah only*; and yet we know that the tribe of Benjamin, and many of the other tribes, then remained, but they are reckoned as one and the same tribe with Judah. Nay, at that very time there was a remnant of Israel that escaped from the Assyrians, and went and adhered to Judah; for we find afterwards that in the reign of Josiah there were some of Manasseh and Ephraim and of the remnant of Israel, who contributed money towards repairing the temple, as well as Judah and Benjamin, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 9. and at the solemn celebration of the passover some of Israel were present as well as all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. When the people returned from the Babylonish captivity, then again several of the tribes of Israel associated themselves, and returned with Judah and Benjamin. In short, at so many different times, and upon such different occasions, were the other tribes gathered to that of Judah, that the latter became the general name of the whole nation; and after the Babylonish captivity, they were no longer called the *people of Israel*; but the *Jews*, or *people of Judah*.

Again, if we understand this of Shiloh, or the Messiah, that the people, or Gentiles, should be gathered to his obedience, it is no more than what is foretold in many other prophecies of scripture; and it began to be fulfilled in Cornelius the centurion, whose conversion (Acts x.) was, as we may say, the first fruits of the Gentiles, and the harvest afterwards was exceeding plenteous. In a few years the gospel was diffused, and took root downward, and bare fruit upward, in the most considerable parts of the then known world: and in Constantine's time, it might with great propriety be said, *the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and he shall reign for ever and ever*. Rev. xi. 15.

If we join these last observations with the words preceding *until Shiloh come*, we shall find two events specified as fore-runners of the scepter departing from Judah, namely, the coming of the Messiah, and the gathering of the Gentiles to him; and these together point out, with great exactness, the precise time of the scepter's departure.

Now it is certain that before the final destruction of Jerusalem, and the dissolution of the Jewish commonwealth by the Romans, the Messiah was not only come, but great numbers of the Gentiles were converted to him. The very same thing was predicted by Our Saviour himself, Matt. xxiv. 14. *This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations. and then shall the end come*, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the Jewish constitution. The Jews were not to be cut off till the Gentiles were grafted into the church; and, in fact, we find that the apostles and their companions preached the gospel in all the then known parts of the world. Their

found (as St. Paul expresses it) *went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.* Rom. x. 18. And *then the end came*, then was an end put to the Jewish polity both in church and state. The government of the tribe of Judah had subsisted in some form or other from the death of Jacob to the last destruction of Jerusalem; but then it was utterly broken and ruined; then the scepter departed, and hath been departed from that time to the present.

It may not be improper here to add a just observation made on the subject by that learned prelate bishop Sherlock. "As the tribe of Benjamin (says he) annexed itself to the tribe of Judah as its head, so it ran the same fortune with it; they went together into captivity, they returned home together, and were both in being when Shiloh came. This also was foretold by Jacob, *Benjamin shall raven as a wolf; in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.* The morning and night here can be nothing else but the morning and night of the Jewish state; for this state is the subject of all Jacob's prophecy from one end to the other; and consequently it is here foretold of Benjamin, that he should continue to the very last times of the Jewish state. This interpretation is confirmed by Moses's prophecy, for the prophecy of Moses is in truth an expo-

sition of Jacob's. *Benjamin, saith Moses, shall dwell in safety; the Lord shall cover him all the day long.* Deut. xxxiii. 12. What is this *all the day long*? The same certainly as *the morning and night*. Does not, therefore, this import a promise of a longer continuance to Benjamin than to the other tribes? And was it not most exactly fulfilled?"

All we have farther to say relative to this prophecy is, that the completion of it (which has been clearly demonstrated) furnishes us with an invincible argument, not only that the Messiah has come, but that Our Blessed Redeemer is the very person. The scepter was not to depart from Judah until the Messiah should come; but the scepter hath long been departed, and consequently the Messiah hath been long come. The scepter departed at the final destruction of Jerusalem, and hath been departed now more than seventeen centuries, and consequently the Messiah came a little before that period; so that prejudice itself cannot long make any doubt concerning the reality of the person. Every man, therefore, of serious reflection must say as Simon Peter said to Jesus, *Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.* John vi. 68, 69.

C H A P. V.

Of the Prophecy of Moses, concerning a Prophet like unto himself.

AMONG the different prophecies transmitted to posterity by the great legislator Moses, who was not only a valuable writer, but a most distinguished prophet, the most memorable is, that of another prophet to be raised like unto himself.

At the time of this prediction Moses was about to leave his people, and therefore, to give them some comfort, he promises them another prophet. *The Lord thy God (says he) will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken.* Deut. xviii. 15. The same is repeated in the name of God, *I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him,* ver. 18. It is likewise farther added, in the next verse, *And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of you.*

In order to explain the meaning of this amazing prophecy, as well as to point out the full and ample completion of it, it is necessary to consider three things.

First, who the prophet was that is here particularly meant.

Secondly, that this prophet resembled Moses in a much greater degree than any other person ever did. And

Thirdly, that the people have been, and still are, severely punished for their infidelity and disobedience to this prophet predicted by Moses.

And first, we shall consider who the prophet was that is here particularly meant. It has been the opinion of some that Joshua was the person, because he is said to have been the *successor of Moses in prophecies*, Ecclesiasticus xlvi. 1. And as the people were commanded to hearken unto this prophet, so they said unto Joshua, *According as we have hearkened unto Moses in all things so will we hearken unto thee,* Joshua i. 17. Some again have imagined that the prophet here meant was Jeremiah, because (say they) he frequently makes use of the words of Moses; and Abarbanel, in his preface to his commentary upon Jeremiah, reckons up fourteen particulars wherein they resemble each other, and observes that as Moses prophesied forty years, so likewise did Jeremiah.

There are others again, and those by far the much greater number, who do not imagine the prophet meant to be either Joshua or Jeremiah, or, indeed, any single person whatever, but a

succession of prophets to be raised up like unto Moses; because (say they) the Jews being prohibited from going after *enchanters* and *diviners*, they could not have been effectually secured from following them, but by having true prophets of their own whom they might consult upon particular occasions.

But notwithstanding this difference in opinion among those who have written on the subject, yet the very favourers themselves of each respective construction agree generally in this; that though Joshua, or Jeremiah, or a succession of prophets, was *primarily* intended, yet the main end, and ultimate scope of the prophecy, was the Messiah; and indeed there are many sufficient reasons for understanding it of him principally, if not solely, besides the preference of a literal and typical interpretation.

Towards the conclusion of the Book of Deuteronomy we find the following passage, which evidently refers to this prophecy, and totally refutes the notion of Joshua's being the prophet like unto Moses. *And Joshua, the son of Nun, was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the Lord commanded Moses. And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face: In all the signs and the wonders which the Lord sent him to do, &c.* See Deut. xxxiv. 9, &c.

At what time, or by what hand, this addition was made to the sacred volume, cannot be certainly told; but it must have been made after the death of Moses. The expression, *there arose not a prophet since in Israel* plainly implies that this addition must have been made some time after Joshua succeeded to the government of the people, and consequently the Jewish church had no conception of a perpetual succession of prophets to be raised up like unto Moses. And if we suppose this addition was made (as it is generally believed to have been) by Ezra after the Babylonish captivity, then it is evident, beyond all contradiction, that neither Jeremiah, nor any of the antient prophets, was esteemed like unto Moses.

Let us now consider what are the peculiar marks and characters, wherein it is said that none other prophet had ever resembled Moses. *There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses.* And which of the prophets ever conversed so frequently and familiarly with God? Which of them ever wrought so many and such astonishing miracles? It must be answered that not any one of all the prophets who succeeded Moses was ever equal or comparable to him, except the Messiah, the great Saviour and Redeemer of mankind.

It is undeniably evident, from the declaration which God was pleased to make on occasion of the sedition raised by Miriam and Aaron (see before page 91.) that there was not to be any prophet in the Jewish church, much less a succession of prophets, like unto Moses. Miriam and Aaron grew jealous of Moses, and mutinied against him, saying, *Hath the Lord, indeed, spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us?* Numb. xii. 2. The controversy, indeed, was of such importance, that God himself was pleased

to interpose, and put an end to it. *If (said he) there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses.*

By this is clearly seen not only the great difference which God was pleased to make between Moses and other prophets, but likewise in what respect that difference lay. God revealed himself unto other prophets in dreams and visions, but with Moses he conversed more openly, that is, *face to face*. These were privileges and prerogatives of the most singular nature, and which evidently distinguished Moses from all the other prophets of the Jewish dispensation. And yet there was a prophet to be raised up like unto Moses: but who ever resembled him in those superior advantages, except the Messiah?

It is, moreover, implied, that this prophet should be a lawgiver. *A prophet like unto thee*; not simply a prophet, but a prophet like unto Moses, that is, (as Eusebius explains it) a second lawgiver. The reason, too, that is assigned for sending this prophet will evince that he was to be vested with this character. The people had requested that the Divine laws might not be delivered to them in so terrible and awful a manner as they were in Horeb. God was pleased to approve of their request, and therefore promised that he would raise up unto them a prophet like unto Moses, a lawgiver who should speak unto them his commands in a familiar and gentle way. The prophet, therefore, here meant was to be a lawgiver: but there were not any of the Jewish prophets lawgivers in all the intermediate time between Moses and Christ.

If we take a farther view of this matter, we shall find, from the most indubitable authority, that there never was any prophet, and much less a succession of prophets, whom the Jews esteemed like unto Moses from his death to the coming of the Messiah. The highest degree of inspiration is termed by them *Mosaic*, and they enumerate several particulars in which *that* hath the pre-eminence and advantage above all others. There was, indeed, in consequence of this prophecy, a general expectation of some extraordinary prophet to arise, which particularly prevailed about the time of Our Saviour's coming on earth. The Jews then, as well as since, understood and applied this prophecy to the Messiah, the only prophet whom they will ever allow to be as great, or greater than Moses.

When Our Saviour had fed five thousand men, by a miracle like that of Moses who fed the Israelites in the wilderness, when those men said, *This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world*, John vi. 14. St. Peter and St. Stephen likewise directly apply the prophecy to him, Acts iii. 22, 23. viii. 37. and they may very well be justified for so doing; for he fully answers all the marks and characters, which are here given of the prophet like unto Moses. He had immediate communication with the deity, and God spake to him *face to face*, as he did to Moses. He performed *signs and wonders* as great

or greater than those of Moses. *I will raise them up a prophet*, saith God; and the people glorified God, saying, *That a great prophet is risen up among us.* Luke viii. 16. *I will put my words in his mouth*, saith God; and Our Saviour saith, *I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me.* John xviii. 8. *He shall speak unto them all that I shall command him*, saith God; and Our Saviour saith, *I have not spoken of myself; but the father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.* John xii. 49, 50.

Having thus clearly pointed out who the person was meant in Moses's prophecy, we are now to take some notice of the great and striking likeness between Moses and Christ, and how far the latter resembled the former in more respects than any other person ever did.

We have already given some instances wherein they resemble each other; namely, of God's speaking to both *face to face*, of both performing *signs and wonders*, of both being *lawgivers*; and in these respects none of the antient prophets were like unto Moses. None of them were lawgivers: they only interpreted and enforced the laws of Moses. None of them performed so many and such great wonders. None of them had such clear communications with God: they all saw visions, and dreamed dreams. Moses and Christ are the only two who perfectly resembled each other in these respects. The comparison between them (as given by Eusebius) we have already shewn in a former part of our work, as the reader will find by referring to page 105. But farther to illustrate this material part of the prophecy, we shall preserve some very curious observations on the subject made by the Rev. Dr. Jortin, in his *Remarks on ecclesiastical History*.

"Moses (says he) fled from his country to escape the hands of the king of Egypt; so did Christ when his parents went into Egypt. Afterwards *the Lord said to Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt; for all the men are dead which sought thy life*, Exod. iv. 19. so the angel of the Lord said to Joseph in almost the same words, *Arise, and take the young child, and go into the land of Israel; for they are dead which sought the young child's life*; Matt. ii. 20. pointing him out as it were for that prophet, who should arise, like unto Moses.

Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, chusing rather to suffer affliction; Christ refused to be made king, chusing rather to suffer affliction.

Moses, says St. Stephen, *was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians*, and Josephus says that he was a very forward and accomplished youth, and had wisdom and knowledge beyond his years. St. Luke observes of Christ, that *he increased (betimes) in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man*, and his discourses in the temple with the doctors, when he was but twelve years old, were a proof of it.

Moses was not only a lawgiver, a prophet, and a worker of miracles, but a king and a priest: in all these offices the resemblance between Moses and Christ was singular.

Moses brought darkness over the land; the sun withdrew his light at Christ's crucifixion: And as the darkness which was spread over Egypt was followed by the destruction of their first born, and of Pharaoh and his host; so the darkness at Christ's death was the forerunner of the destruction of the Jews.

Moses foretold the calamities which would befall the nation for their disobedience; so did Christ.

The spirit which was in Moses was conferred in some degree upon the seventy elders, and they prophesied; Christ conferred miraculous powers upon his seventy disciples.

Moses was victorious over powerful kings and great nations; so was Christ by the effects of his religion, and by the fall of those who persecuted his church.

Moses conquered Amalec by holding up both his hands; Christ overcame his and our enemies when his hands were fastened to the cross.

Moses interceded for transgressors, and caused an atonement to be made for them, and stopped the wrath of God; so did Christ.

Moses ratified a covenant between God and the people by sprinkling them with blood; Christ with his own blood.

Moses desired to die for the people, and prayed that God would forgive them, or blot him out of his book; Christ did more, he died for sinners.

Moses instituted the passover, when a lamb was sacrificed, none of whose bones were to be broken, and whose blood protected the people from destruction; Christ was the paschal lamb.

Moses lifted up the serpent, that they who looked upon him might be healed of their mortal wounds; By properly looking up to Christ all will be healed.

All Moses's affection towards the people, all his cares and toils on their account were repaid by them with ingratitude, murmuring, and rebellion; the same returns the Jews made to Christ for all his benefits.

Moses was ill used by his own family, his brother and sister rebelled against him; there was a time when Christ's own brethren believed not in him.

Moses had a very wicked and perverse generation committed to his care and conduct, and to enable him to rule them, miraculous powers were given to him, and he used his utmost endeavour to make the people obedient to God, and to save them from ruin; but in vain; in the space of forty years they all fell in the wilderness except two: Christ also was given to a generation not less wicked and perverse, his instructions and his miracles were lost upon them, and in about the same space of time, after they had rejected him, they were destroyed.

Moses was very meek above all men that were on the face of the earth; so was Christ.

The people could not enter into the land of promise till Moses was dead; by the death of Christ the kingdom of heaven was open to believers.

In the death of Moses and Christ there is also a resemblance of some circumstances: Moses died, in one sense, for the iniquities of the people; it was their rebellion which was the occasion of it, which drew down the displeasure of God upon

upon them and upon him; Moses went up, in the sight of the people, to the top of mount Nebo, and there he died, when he was in perfect vigour, when *his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated*: Christ suffered for the sins of men, and was led up, in the presence of the people, to mount Calvary, where he died in the flower of his age, and when he was in his full natural strength.

Neither Moses, nor Christ, as far as we can collect from sacred history, were ever sick, or felt any bodily decay or infirmity, which would have rendered them unfit for the toils they underwent; their sufferings were of another kind.

Moses was buried, and no man knew where his body lay; nor could the Jews find the body of Christ.

Lastly, As Moses, a little before his death, promised *another prophet*; so Christ, before his death, promised *another comforter*."

Such are the comparisons made by Dr. Jortin relative to the great resemblance between Moses and Christ; but the greatest similitude consists in their both being *lawgivers*, which no other prophet ever was. They may resemble each other in many other circumstances, and a fruitful imagination may strike upon a likeness, where, in reality, there is not any to be found. But, as the same excellent writer concludes, "Is this similitude and correspondence in so many things between Moses and Christ the effect of mere chance? Let us search all the records of universal history, and see if we can find a man who was so like to Moses as Christ was, and so like to Christ as Moses was. If we cannot find such an one, then have we found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of God."

We come now to consider the last part of the prophecy, in doing of which it will be no very difficult matter to prove, that the people have been, and still are, severely punished for their infidelity and disobedience to this prophet.

The words in this part of the prophecy are very clear and express. *Unto him ye shall hearken: And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.* That is, I will severely punish him for it; or, as the Seventy translate it, *I will take vengeance of him.*

This prophecy, as we have clearly proved, evidently relates to Christ. God himself, in a manner, applies it to him; for when he was transfigured, there came a voice out of the cloud,

which said, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him, Matt: xvii. 5. This manifestly alludes to the words of Moses, *Unto him ye shall hearken*, and clearly points out that Christ alone was the prophet like unto Moses. The apostle St. Peter directly applies it to Our Saviour. *For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you: And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people,* Acts iii. 22. 23.

And hath not this terrible denunciation been fully executed upon the Jews? Was not the compleat destruction of that incredulous nation (soon after Christ had finished his ministry among them, and his apostles had likewise preached in vain) the fulfilling of the threat for not hearkening unto him? We may be the more certain of this application, as Our Saviour himself not only denounced the same destruction, but also foretold the signs, the manner, and the circumstances of it with the greatest exactness. Such, indeed, of those Jews who believed in his name, by remembering the caution, and following the advice which he had given them, escaped from the general ruin of their country: but the main body either perished in their infidelity, or were carried captives into other nations, and by persisting in the same infidelity, they have ever since been a vagabond, distressed and miserable people.

The wise dispensations of Providence are in no respect more amply displayed than in the fulfilment of this part of the prophecy. We must be blind not to see it; and seeing, we cannot but admire and adore it. What account can the Jews themselves give of their long captivity, dispersion and misery? Their former captivity, for the punishment of their wickedness and idolatry lasted only seventy years; but they have lived in their present dispersion, even though they have not been idolaters, upwards of seventeen hundred.

But though they have thus long laboured under these calamities for the enormity of their crimes, yet, it is to be hoped that, upon a proper faith and repentance, they will, in time, become objects of the Divine mercy. We shall therefore conclude with the words of the apostle St. Paul, *Our hearts desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they may be saved,* Rom. x. 1.

C H A P. VI.

The Prophecies of Moses concerning the Jews.

BESIDES the great and amazing prophecy related in the preceding chapter, Moses, a short time before his death, delivered many others to the Jews, in which he predicted the great blessings that would be bestowed upon them, if they paid a proper attention to the laws he had given them, and, on the contrary, the heavy curses that would unavoidably fall upon them if they became refractory and disobedient to the Divine will.

These prophecies are contained in the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy, and the greater part of them relate to the curses that should fall on the Jews in case of their disobedience, all which have been since most strictly fulfilled, as will appear from the following observations.

The first on the head begins at the 49th verse, in which it is said, *The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth, a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand.* This was fulfilled in the Chaldeans, who may be justly said to have come from far, in comparison with the Moabites, Philistines, and others, who frequently invaded Judea, and committed depredations in various parts of the country.

The like description of the Chaldeans is given by the prophet Jeremiah, *Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the Lord: it is a mighty nation, it is an antient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest what they say,* Jeremiah v. 15. He likewise compares the enemies of the Jews to eagles, *Our persecutors (says he) are swifter than the eagles of the heaven: they pursued us upon the mountains, they laid wait for us in the wilderness*,* Lam. iv. 9.

In the 50th verse of the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy the people who were to be the persecutors of the Jews are thus farther characterized. And they shall be *a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young.* Such were the Chaldeans; and the sacred historian expressly saith, that, for the wickedness of the Jews, God brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword, in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age; he gave them all into his hand. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 17.

The Romans were no less the persecutors of the Jews than the Chaldeans, of which Josephus

gives us the following instances. He says, that when Vespasian entered the city of Gadara (which was for a long time strongly defended by the Jews) "he slew all, man by man, the Romans not shewing mercy to either age or sex; and that he did this out of hatred to the nation, and remembrance of their former injuries." The like slaughter was made at Gamala, "for no person escaped except two women who concealed themselves, and thereby avoided the rage of the Romans. They did not so much as spare young children; but every one, at that time, snatching up many, cast them down from the citadel."

According to the prophecy of Moses, the enemies of the Jews were to besiege and take their cities, *And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land.* This was accordingly fulfilled, for Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them, 2 Kings xviii. 13. and Nebuchadnezzar and his captains took and spoiled Jerusalem, burnt the city and temple, and brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about, 2 Kings, xxv. 10.

The Romans likewise (according to what we read in Josephus's history of the Jewish wars) demolished several fortified places before they besieged and destroyed Jerusalem. And the Jews who inhabited that city may very justly be said to have trusted in their high and fenced walls, for they seldom ventured a battle in the open field. They confided in the strength and situation of Jerusalem, as the Jebusites (the former inhabitants of the place) had done before them; *Who shall come down against us? or who shall enter into our habitation?* Jeremiah xxi. 13.

Jerusalem, indeed, was a very strong place, and (according to the description given of it by Tacitus and Josephus) was wonderfully fortified both by nature and art. And yet, how many times was it taken previous to its final destruction by Titus? It was taken by Shishak king of Egypt, by Nebuchadnezzar, by Antiochus Epiphanes, by Pompey, by Socius, and, lastly, by Herod.

The Jews, in these sieges, were to suffer great hardships, but more particularly by famine. Accordingly, when the king of Assyria besieged Samaria, there was a great famine in that city; *and behold they besieged it, until an ass's head was sold for four pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of doves dung for five pieces of silver,* 2 Kings

* This description, however, cannot be applied to any nation with such propriety as to the Romans, who, from the rapidity of their conquests, and the destruction they made among the Jews, might very justly be compared to eagles,

and, perhaps, not without an allusion to the standard of the Roman armies, which was the figure of that bird: their language also was much more unknown to the Jews than that of the Chaldee.

2 Kings vi. 25. When Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem, *the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land*, 2 Kings xxv. 3. And in the last siege of Jerusalem by the Romans there was a most dreadful famine in the city, as appears by the following melancholy account given of it by Josephus: He saith particularly, "that, so great were the distresses of the people, that women snatched the very food out of the mouths of their husbands, and sons of their father's; and, what was most miserable, mothers of their infants." In another place he says, "In every house, if there appeared any semblance of food, a battle immediately took place, and the dearest friends and relations fought with each other, snatching away the miserable provisions of life."—Thus was literally fulfilled the words of Moses; who says, *the man's eye shall be evil towards his brother, and towards the wife of his bosom, and towards his children, because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates; and, in like manner, the woman's eye shall be evil towards the husband of her bosom, and towards her son, and towards her daughter.* See Deut. xxviii, 54, &c.

According to another part of this prophecy, great numbers of the Jews were to be destroyed. *And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude.* Deut. xxviii. 62. Not to mention any other of the calamities and slaughters which they have undergone, there was in the last siege of Jerusalem (according to the account given by Josephus) an infinite multitude that perished by famine. He computes that, during the whole siege, the number of those who were destroyed by the famine and sword amounted to eleven hundred thousand, the people being then assembled from all parts to celebrate the passover. There certainly is not a nation upon the earth that hath been exposed to so many massacres and persecutions as the Jews. Their history abounds with them; and if God had not been pleased to have given them a promise of a numerous posterity, they must, many hundred years ago, have been totally extirpated.

The prophecy farther saith, that they should be carried into Egypt, and there sold for slaves. *And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again, with ships: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen.* Deut. xxviii. 68. They had, indeed, come out of Egypt triumphant, but now they were to return thither as slaves. They had, on their coming out, walked through the sea as on dry land, but now they were to be carried thither in ships. They might be carried thither in the ships of the Tyrian or Sidonian merchants, or by the Romans, who had a fleet in the Mediterranean; and this was certainly a much safer way of conveying so many prisoners than sending them by land.

That this part of the prophecy was fulfilled evidently appears from the account given us by Josephus, who says, that in the reigns of the two first Ptolemies many of the Jews were sent into Egypt as slaves. And when Jerusalem was taken by Titus, he sent the greater part of those captives who were upwards of seventeen years of age to the works in Egypt: such as were under

that age he sold for slaves, but so little care was taken of them that no less than eleven thousand perished for want. This is confirmed by St. Jerome, who says, that "after their last overthrow many thousands of them were sold; that those who could not be sold were transported into Egypt, and perished by shipwreck or famine; or were massacred by the inhabitants."

And ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it, Deut. xxviii. 63. This was amply fulfilled when the ten tribes were carried into captivity by the king of Assyria, and other nations were planted in their stead; and when the two other tribes were carried away captives to Babylon, besides other captivities and transportations of the people at different periods. Afterwards, when the emperor Adrian had subdued the rebellious Jews, he published an edict, in which he not only forbade them, on pain of death, from setting foot in Jerusalem, but prohibited them from even entering into the country of Judea. From that time to the present Judea has been in the possession of foreign lords and masters, few of the Jews dwelling in it, and those only of a very low and servile condition. This has been clearly proved by several modern travellers, particularly Mr. Sandys, who, in speaking of the Holy Land, says, "it is for the most part now inhabited by Moors and Arabians; the one possessing the vallies, and the other the mountains. Turks there be few; but many Greeks with other Christians of all sects and nations, such as impute to the place an adherent holiness. Here are also some Jews, yet they inherit no part of the land, but live as aliens in their own country."

Thus have the Jews been *plucked from off the land which they possessed.* But this was not all, for, according to the prophecy, they were to be dispersed into all nations. *And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth unto the other.* Deut. xxviii. 64. These words were partly fulfilled in the Babylonish captivity; but they have been more amply fulfilled since the great dispersion of the Jews by the Romans. What people, indeed, have been scattered so far and wide as they? and where is the nation which is a stranger to them, or to which they are strangers? They swarm in many parts of the East, and are spread through most of the countries in Europe and Africa. In short, they are to be found in all places where there is a circulation of trade and money, and may, properly speaking, be called the brokers of the whole world.

It was likewise foretold by Moses, that though they should be so dispersed, yet they should not be totally destroyed, but should still subsist as a distinct people. *And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them,* Levit. xxvi. 44. This part of the prophecy hath been most strictly fulfilled, for (as Mr. Basnage says) the Jewish nation, like the bush of Moses, hath been always burning, but never consumed. And what an astonishing thing it is to think, that after so many wars, battles and sieges; after so many fires, famines and pestilences; after so many

many rebellions, massacres and persecutions; after so many years of captivity, slavery and misery, they have not been utterly destroyed, but are still scattered among all nations, and subsist as a distinct people?

They were to suffer greatly in their dispersion, and not to rest long in any place. *And among the nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest*, Deut. xxxiii. 65. This likewise hath been amply fulfilled; for so far have they been from finding rest that they have been banished from city to city, and from country to country. In many places they have been banished, and recalled, and then banished again. Of these there are numerous instances; but we shall here only mention their great banishments in modern times, and from countries well known. Towards the latter end of the thirteenth century they were banished from England by Edward I. and were not permitted to return and settle again till Cromwell's time. In the latter end of the fourteenth century they were banished from France by Charles VI; and ever since they have been only tolerated, they have not enjoyed entire liberty, except at Mentz, where they have a synagogue. In the latter end of the fifteenth century they were banished from Spain by Ferdinand and Isabella; and (according to Mariana the Spanish historian,) there were an hundred and seventy thousand families, or (as some say) eight hundred thousand persons who left the kingdom. They paid dearly to John II. for a refuge in Portugal, but within a few years were expelled from thence also by his successor Emanuel. And in our own time, within these few years, they were banished from Prague by order of the queen of Bohemia.

But they were not only to be banished from their own country, and dispersed into various parts throughout the world, but likewise, wherever they went, were to be *oppressed and spoiled evermore*, and their *houses and vineyards, their oxen and asses* to be taken from them, Deut. xxviii. 29, &c. That this has been strictly fulfilled will evidently appear when we consider the very frequent and great seizures that have been made of their effects in almost all countries. How often has heavy fines been laid on them by the princes of the different nations in which they have dwelt? and how often have they been obliged to secure their lives by the forfeiture of their possessions? Of this there have been innumerable instances, and some even in our own country. King Henry III. of England always laid a heavy tax on the Jews at every low ebb of his fortunes. "One Abraham (says a celebrated writer) who was found a delinquent, was forced to pay seven hundred marks for his redemption. Aaron, another Jew, protested, that the king had taken from him, at times, thirty thousand marks of silver, besides two hundred marks of gold. And in like manner he used many others of the Jews." And when they were banished, in the reign of Edward I. all their estates were confiscated to the crown.

Their sons and daughters should be given unto another people, Deut. xxviii. 32. This has been likewise fulfilled, for, in several countries, but more particularly in Spain and Portugal, their children have been taken from them, by order of the Go-

vernment, to be educated in the popish religion. Mr. Basnage (in his history of the Jews) tells us, that "the council of Toledo ordered all their children to be taken from them, lest they should partake of their errors, and that they should be shut up in monasteries to be instructed in the Christian truths." And, when they were banished from Portugal, "the king (says Mariana) ordered that all their children, who were under fourteen years of age, should be taken from them and baptized."

And they should be mad for the sight of their eyes which they should see, Deut. xxxviii. 34. That this part of the prophecy has been most amply fulfilled we have the clearest evidence; for, into what madness, fury and desperation have they repeatedly been driven by the cruel usage, extortions and oppressions they have undergone? Of this we shall only mention two particular instances, one from ancient, and the other from modern history. The first is related by Josephus, who says, "After the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, some of the worst of the Jews took refuge in the castle of Masada, where, being closely besieged by the Romans, they, at the persuasion of Eleazar their leader, first murdered their wives and children, after which ten men were chosen by lot to slay the rest. This being done, one of the ten was chosen, in like manner, to kill the other nine, which having executed, he set fire to the place, and then stabbed himself; there were nine hundred and sixty who perished in this miserable manner, and only two women and five boys escaped, which they effected by hiding themselves in the aqueducts under ground." The other instance is recorded by Mr. Basnage, who says, "In the reign of Richard I. of England, when the people were in arms to make a general massacre of the Jews, fifteen hundred of them seized on the city of York to defend themselves; but being besieged, they offered to capitulate, and to ransom their lives with money. This offer being refused, one of them cried out in despair, that it was better to die courageously for the law, than to fall into the hands of the Christians. In consequence of this every man immediately took his knife and stabbed his wife and children. The men afterwards retired into the king's palace, which they set on fire, and in which themselves were consumed."

The prophecy farther tells us, that they *should become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word to all nations*, Deut. xxviii. 37. And do we not hear and see this part of the prophecy fulfilled every day? Is not the avarice, usury, and hard-heartedness of a Jew grown proverbial? and are not their persons generally odious among all sorts of people? Mahometans, Heathens, and Christians, however they may disagree in other points, yet generally agree in villifying, abusing, and persecuting the Jews. In most places where they are tolerated, they live in a separate quarter by themselves, and wear some badge of distinction. Their very countenances commonly distinguish them from the rest of mankind, and they are, in all respects, treated, as if they were of another species.

Lastly,

Lastly, *their plagues should be wonderful, even great plagues, and of long continuance, Deut. xxviii. 59.* And have not their plagues continued upwards of seventeen hundred years? What nation hath suffered so much, and yet continued so long? What nation hath subsisted as a distinct people in their own country so long as these have done in their dispersion into all countries? And what a standing miracle is this exhibited to the view and observation of the whole world?

These astonishing prophecies were delivered upwards of three thousand years ago, and from

the fulfilment of them, which we see every day taking place in the world, are the strongest proofs that can be given of the Divine legation of Moses. They are truly as Moses foretold they would be, *a sign and a wonder for ever. Moreover, all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments, and his statutes which he commanded thee: And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever, Deut. xxviii. 45, 46.*

C H A P. VII.

Containing the Prophecies of JEREMIAH, ISAIAH, MICAH, EZEKIEL, and other Prophets, relative to the Jews.

THE punishment to be inflicted on the Jews for their manifold transgressions was not only foretold by their great legislator Moses, but likewise many other persons, who received the spirit of inspiration. These prophecies were delivered at different periods, and were designed to reform the Jews from the wicked course of life to which they were naturally addicted; but, as they continued inflexible, the prophecies denounced against them were strictly fulfilled.

Among others of the prophecies it was foretold that the ten tribes of Israel should be carried away captives by the king of Assyria, and that the two remaining tribes of Judah and Benjamin should be made captives to the king of Babylon: but with this difference, that the two tribes should be restored and return from their captivity, but the ten tribes should be lost and dissolved in theirs.

The time when the captivity of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin was to take place, as also that of their restoration, was foretold by the prophet Jeremiah. *This whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years, Jer. xxv. 11.* And again, *Thus saith the Lord, that after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word towards you, in causing you to return to this place, Jer. xxix. 10.*

This prophecy was delivered *in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, Jer. xxv. 1.* In the same year the prophecy began to take place, for Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judea, besieged and took Jerusalem, made Jehoiakim his subject and tributary, transported the finest children of the royal family and of the nobility to Babylon to be brought up as slaves in his palaces. He likewise destroyed the temple, carried away the sacred vessels, and placed them in the temple of his idol Bel at Babylon. The whole number carried into captivity amounted to ten thousand, there being only a few left of

very poor and mean condition to till and cultivate the land.

In this situation they remained for seventy years, when Cyrus, king of Babylon issued a proclamation for the restoration of the Jews, and for the rebuilding of the temple of Jerusalem. In consequence of this the Jews immediately returned to their own country, and dispersed themselves into the respective cities they had formerly inhabited. The temple was begun and carried on with great assiduity for some time, but by the great interruption they met with from the Samaritans, was not finished till the reign of Darius, when all things were again restored to their former state. And thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah relative to the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

The prophecy against the ten tribes of Israel, was much more severe than that against the other two. The tribe of Ephraim, which was the chief of these, is often put for the whole ten, and it was predicted that *within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken that it be not a people, Isaiah vii. 8.* This prophecy was delivered in the first year of Ahaz king of Judah, when Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah king of Israel, formed a conjunction to reduce Jerusalem; and it was to comfort Ahaz and the house of David in these difficulties and distresses, that the prophet Isaiah was commissioned to assure him, that the kings of Syria and Israel should remain only the heads of their respective cities; that they should not prevail against Jerusalem, and that within sixty and five years Israel should be so broken that it should be no more a people.

The fulfilment of this prophecy commenced in the reign of Ahaz, when Tiglath-pilezer took many of the Israelites, *even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive into Assyria, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan. 1 Chron. v. 26. 2 Kings xv. 29.* His son Shalmaneser, in the reign

reign of Hezekiah, took Samaria and carried away still greater numbers *unto Assyria, and put them in Holab and in Habor by the river of Gozan* (the same places where their brethren had been carried before them) *and in the cities of the Medes*, 2 Kings xviii.

II. His son Sennacherib came up also against Hezekiah, and all the fenced cities of Judah; but his army was miraculously defeated, and he himself was forced to return with shame and disgrace into his own country, where he was murdered by two of his sons, 2 Kings xvii. 19. Another of his sons, Esarhaddon succeeded him in the throne, but it was some time before he could recover his kingdom from these disorders, and think of reducing Syria and Palestine again to his obedience: and then it was, and not till then, that he completed the ruin of the ten tribes, carried away the remains of the people, and, to prevent the land from becoming desolate, *brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthab, and from Hava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria, instead of the children of Israel*, 2 Kings xvii. 24. Ephraim was broken from being a kingdom before, but it was now broken from being a people. And from that time to this what account can be given of the people of Israel as distinct from those of Judah? Where have they subsisted all this time? And where is their situation, or what their present condition?

At their first dispersion they were carried into Assyria and Media, and if they subsisted any where it is reasonable to imagine they might be found there in great abundance. But this is not the case, neither are they to be found in any of those parts where it has been asserted, by different Jewish writers, they took up their residence. It is the opinion of some that they returned into their own country, with the other two tribes after the Babylonish captivity. The decree, indeed, of Cyrus extended to *all the people of God*, Ezra i. 3. and that of Artaxerxes to *all the people of Israel*, vii. 13. and no doubt but many of the Israelites took advantage of these decrees, and returned with Zerubbabel and Ezra to their own cities: but still the main body of the ten tribes remained behind; and if the whole did not return at this time, they cannot be supposed to have returned in a body at any time after, for we do not read of any such circumstance in history, neither of the time or occasion of their return. The celebrated Dean Prideaux says, "the ten tribes of Israel, which had separated from the house of David, were brought to a full and utter destruction, and never after recovered themselves again. For those who were thus carried away (excepting only some few, who joining themselves to the Jews in the land of their captivity returned with them) soon going into the usages and idolatry of the nations among whom they were planted (to which they were too much addicted while in their own land) after a time became wholly absorbed, and swallowed up in them, and thence utterly losing their name, their language and their memorial, were never after spoken of."

But if the whole race of Israel became thus extinct and perished for ever, it may be asked how

can the numerous prophecies be fulfilled which promise the future conversion and restoration of Israel as well as Judah? The truth we conceive to lie between these two opinions. Neither did they all return to Jerusalem, nor did all who remained behind comply with the idolatry of the Gentiles, among whom they lived. But whether they remained, or whether they returned, this prophecy of Isaiah was still fulfilled; the kingdom, the commonwealth, the state of Israel was utterly broken; they no longer subsisted as a distinct people from Judah, they no longer maintained a separate religion, they joined themselves to the Jews from whom they had been unhappily divided, they lost the name of Israel as a name of distinction, and were thenceforth all in common called Jews.

It appears from the book of Esther, that there were great numbers of Jews in all the hundred twenty and seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus or Artaxerxes Longimanus king of Persia, and they could not all be the remains of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, who had refused to return to Jerusalem with their brethren; they must, at least many of them, have been the descendants of the ten tribes whom the kings of Assyria had carried away captive; but yet they are all spoken of as one and the same people, and all, without distinction, are denominated Jews.

We read in the acts of the Apostles, that there went to Jerusalem, to celebrate the feast of Pentecost, *Parthians and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia*, Acts ii. 9. These men came from the countries wherein the ten tribes had been placed, and, in all probability, were therefore some of their posterity; but yet these, as well as the rest, are styled *Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven*, Acts ii. 5. Those likewise of the ten tribes, who returned to Jerusalem, united with the ten tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and formed but one nation, one body of Jews. They might, perhaps, for some ages, have preserved their genealogies; but they are now incorporated together, and the distinction of tribes and families is, in a great measure, lost among them, and they have all, from the Babylonish captivity to this day, been comprehended under the general name of Jews.

There were many persons of all the ten tribes in being during the time of St. Paul's ministry; for he speaketh of *the twelve tribes hoping to attain to the promise of God*, Acts xxxvi. 7. and St. James addresses his epistle *to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad*, James i. 1. And there is no doubt but there are many of the descendants of the ten tribes of Israel still in being, though they cannot be separated from the rest. They are all confounded with the other Jews, and there is no difference between them. The Samaritans, indeed, (of whom there are still some remains at Sichem, and the neighbouring towns) pretend to be the descendants of the children of Israel, but they are really derived from those nations which Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, planted in the country, after he had carried thence the ten tribes into captivity. And it is for this reason that the Jews call them by no other name than Cuthites, which was the name of the principal person of those nations. They exclaim against them

them as the worst of heretics, and, if possible, have a greater aversion to them than to the Christians.

It may, perhaps, be asked by some what could be the reason that such a material difference and distinction should be made between the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin and the ten tribes of Israel. Why the latter should be, as it were, lost in their captivity, and the former restored, and preserved several ages after. To this it is answered, that the ten tribes had totally revolted from God to the worship of the golden calves in Dan and Bethel; and for this, and their idolatry and wickedness, they were suffered to remain in the land of their captivity. The Jews were restored, not so much for their own sakes as for the sake of the promises made unto their forefathers, namely, the promise to Judah that the Messiah should come of his tribe, and the promise to David that the Messiah should be born of his family. It was therefore necessary for the tribe of Judah, and the families of that tribe, to be kept distinct until the Divine dispensation should be accomplished. But since these ends have been fully answered, the tribes of Judah and Benjamin are as much confounded as any of the rest: all distinction of families and genealogies is lost among them; and (as Bishop Chandler observes) the Jews themselves acknowledge as much in saying, that when the Messiah shall come, it will be part of his office "to sort their families, restore their genealogies, and set aside strangers."

In what an astonishing manner does it engage the attention of the most serious, when they reflect on the preservation of the Jews through so many ages, notwithstanding the great efforts that have been made, at different periods, totally to extirpate them, and that, instead of themselves, all their enemies have been finally reduced. But wonderful as these events may appear, they are still made much more so by their being signified beforehand by the spirit of prophecy, as we find particularly in the prophet Jeremiah, *Fear not thou, O Jacob my servant, saith the Lord, for I am with thee, for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee, but I will not make a full end of thee.* Jer. xlv. 28.

Of all the astonishing things we meet with both in antient and modern histories, there is not certainly any to be found so remarkably singular as that of the preservation of the Jews to the present period of time. They have been dispersed among all nations, and yet they are not confounded with any. They flow into all parts of the world, mix with all nations, and yet keep separate from all. They still live as a distinct people, and yet they do not live any where according to their own laws: they neither elect their own magistrates, nor enjoy the full exercise of their religion. Their solemn feasts and sacrifices are limited to one certain place, and that hath been now, for many ages, in the hands of strangers and aliens, who will not suffer them to come thither. No people on the whole face of the earth have continued unmixed so long as they have done. The northern nations have come in great multitudes into the more southern parts of Europe; but where are they now to be discerned and distinguished? The Gauls went forth

in great bodies to seek their fortune in foreign parts; but what traces or footsteps of them are now remaining any where? In France, who can separate the race of the antient Gauls from the various other people, who, from time to time, have settled there? In Spain, who can distinguish exactly between the first possessors the Spaniards, and the Goths and Moors, who conquered and kept possession of the country for some time? In England, who can pretend to say with certainty which families are derived from the antient Britains, and which from the Romans, or Saxons, or Danes, or Normans? The most antient and honourable pedigrees can be traced up only to a certain period, and beyond that there is nothing but conjecture and uncertainty, obscurity and ignorance. But the Jews can go up higher than any nation: they can even deduce their pedigree from the beginning of the world. They may not know from what particular tribe or family they are descended, but they know certainly that they all sprung from the stock of Abraham. And yet the contempt with which they have been treated, and the hardships which they have undergone in almost all countries, should, one would think, have made them desirous to forget or renounce their original; but they profess it, they glory in it: and after so many wars, massacres, and persecutions, they still subsist, they still are very numerous: and what but a supernatural power could have preserved them in such a manner as none other nation upon earth hath been preserved?

At the same time that we behold with astonishment the wise dispensations of Providence in having protected the Jews even to the present period, we cannot, without equal astonishment, reflect on the circumstance of his having been pleased likewise utterly to destroy their enemies. The first oppressors of the Jews were the Egyptians, who detained them from their own land, compelled them into captivity, treated them with great cruelty, and kept them for many years in bondage. The Assyrians carried away captives the ten tribes of Israel, and the Babylonians afterwards the two remaining tribes of Judah and Benjamin. The Syro-Macedonians, especially Antiochus Epiphanes, cruelly persecuted them: and the Romans utterly dissolved the Jewish state, and dispersed the people so that they have never been able to recover their city and country ever since.

And where are now these great and famous monarchies, which, in their time, subdued and oppressed the people of God? Are they not vanished, and not only their power, but almost even their very names lost on the earth? The Egyptians, Assyrians, and Babylonians were overthrown, and entirely subjugated by the Persians: and the Persians (it is remarkable) were the restorers of the Jews, as well as the destroyers of their enemies. The Syro-Macedonians were swallowed up by the Romans: and the Roman empire, great and powerful as it was, was broken into pieces by the repeated incursions of the northern nations; while the Jews are subsisting as a distinct people to this day. And how wonderful is it to think that the vanquished should so many ages survive the victors, and the